2007-Eckhart-Tolle-Art-of-Presence-Retreat

[Speaker 2] (0:20 - 1:09)

Sunrise, another new morning, we celebrate, we are the new man. Sunrise, over the mountain, spreading your light, over the land.

[Speaker 1] (1:32 - 12:58)

I trust that nobody is in a hurry to start. Welcome to our retreat, your retreat, from the world, especially the world in your head. Taking a step back, retreat.

You've come here, not alone, you've probably come with your mind. The mind has come with you. But be thankful because the mind allowed you to come here.

Some people didn't make it. A few always cancel at the last minute. I wonder if we should go now, I don't feel like going.

What's the point of another retreat? Whatever the mind can say. And then you completely believe in whatever thought the mind throws up.

Yeah, no, I'm not going. Or maybe I should. And with some of you it was touch and go whether you would make it or not.

I'm sure it happens. And yet, there was a stronger impulse in you to come than the resistance to coming here, which you may have felt also. Or which you may feel, even though this is not a long retreat, even though it's only three days.

But you may feel this resistance even while you're here. You may already have felt it. The mind, the thinking mind, the stream of conditioned thinking.

The egoic entity that arises out of that. Maybe looking for an opportunity to get your way from here. From time to time it may come up.

It may focus on something that is not absolutely perfect in your environment. In whatever situation you're in here. Because there's no such thing as a perfect situation.

Unless you live in complete surrender to what is, in which case every situation is perfect. But from the point of view of the mind, of course you can always find something that isn't right. That you could complain about.

And the mind says, this situation is not as it should be. This shouldn't be, that shouldn't be. Yes, but it is.

So you work with the limitations that are here, even here, at a retreat centre. Certain limitations, different ones from the ones you find at home. Less privacy perhaps, you can

complain about that.

Not warm enough. This or that. The person you're sharing the room with is not according to the expectations of the mind.

Not spiritual enough. Or even worse, more spiritual than me. Oh, he must have been at it for a long time.

So, in any situation, you don't have to wait long before some kind of flaw in the external situation will come up. What looks like a flaw. Which means there's a clash between the expectations and demands of the mind and the simple suchness of this moment.

And some egos love to be personally offended when these things happen. So, how can, to me, it's a personal something. They should, why don't they?

He should, she should. She shouldn't, they shouldn't. The weather should be warmer by now.

So, you observe the talking entity in the head as you're here. Which occasionally may try to talk you out of being here. Either by physically removing you from here and you run away.

Or by taking you away from here by observing you. By absorbing all your attention into a mind stream. And physically you're then still here.

And mentally you're somewhere totally different. Past, future or dreamland. And you can see then that presence, there's no presence, there is an absence.

Now, of course, this retreat is not called the art of absence. But the art of presence. But absence may, does not require art.

Absence happens easy enough. So, you may detect occasionally yourself becoming absent. Which simply means your attention is no longer here.

It's being drawn into a stream of thinking. And usually can tell easily by looking at a person. Whether they are present or absent.

Of course, there are degrees of absence. You can be totally absent, which means you don't hear a single word. Or you can be absent in the sense that you are commenting on what you hear.

Which means you're not really fully absorbing. You are more interested in your own standpoint. Opinion or mental position.

Than in what is being said. And often you believe that your standpoint is of course the right one. There's identification with the mental position.

And that's a form of absence also. It's not total absence, but you're not really fully here. That may happen, for example, to people who've been, who are very knowledgeable about spiritual matters.

Have read lots of books. Which can become a hindrance too. If you carry them in here.

So if you feel the impulse to leave here. That's of course another way the mind may succeed in getting you away from here. If you can, don't just run off at the first thought that comes into your head.

With an accompanying emotion of disgust. Disgust. Back home to my privacy, my own bed.

Why did I leave that? I could be more peaceful there than can I be here. And the moment you get home you say, I should never have left.

[Speaker 2] (13:00 - 13:01)

I failed.

[Speaker 1] (13:08 - 54:02)

And the torture continues. But in all of you, something is arising. That is a relatively new thing.

At least the fact that it's arising on a wider scale now is a relatively new thing on the planet. And that is a state of consciousness that we could call presence. And to deepen that, that's why we're here.

To deepen the ability to be fully present with what is. The ability to respond to life. Which is now, always now.

Out of that state of presence. Not out of conditioned mind stuff. Conditioning of the mind.

Sometimes I use strange expressions like, you grow in presence. Presence grows in you. Presence arises more fully.

Excuse me, says a mind somewhere. You haven't defined presence yet. I don't understand what you mean.

In the course of the retreat, you may get a few definitions, a few pointers. Never enough to satisfy the mind, of course. Especially as regards presence.

Because through thought, you cannot possibly grasp what presence is. Because thought is always grasping at concepts. And then, oh, I've got it now.

I've defined it. There it is. I've given it form.

But presence is vast. It has no form. Thought, each thought is a thought form.

It's born and then it goes. Or it sticks around for a while. Or it takes over for a while.

Thoughts, every thought is a little entity, a little being, a temporary energetic entity. So I'm not right now defining presence because it is unnecessary. As you said here, presence deepens.

Because presence is, to a large extent, the unspoken dimension of this gathering. If you're here thinking that the words that are being spoken are the central point of our retreat, that would be an error. It's not the case.

The words are secondary. What else is there? And you may notice the mind is always waiting for the next word.

Or it's busy thinking about the last one. Is it possible to be here without thinking about the last word? And without waiting for the next one?

And without going to sleep? Because that's one way of not thinking about the last and not waiting for the next. But that's not the way here.

You can do that at home. You can fall below thinking at home easily. A cup of drinks, TV.

You're drifting towards unconsciousness gradually. And you may feel a little better than the torture of your mind. There too there is some relief from the daily torture of the mind, yes?

But that's not the way we are going. It's not the way back to the animal realm, the nature realm, the mineral realm. You can go all the way back.

And it's wonderful for the animal realm in itself. It has a perfection that the human realm does not have. Even the mineral has a perfection that the human does not have.

Because humans are transitional beings. They are neither one nor the other. So we are not here in an attempt to fall below thinking.

But to rise above thinking, so to speak. We are not becoming less awake, less alert, less alive. But more alert, more awake, more intensely alive.

So here you have the level of thinking. It's been the human dimension for thousands and thousands of years. Below it you have the dimension of no thought.

Instinctive no thought, natural no thought. And above it you have the dimension of presence. You have transcended thought.

How? By not thinking about the last word. And not waiting for the next one.

And not even trying to work out what I've just said. Not making presence into some new thought form. Can one live like that?

In a state of relaxed alertness? Which is presence. Not the state of alertness that comes from mind and ego.

Which is not real alertness, which is really a state of fearful tension. No. It's open, not closed.

Completely open. And you're able to look, to hear, to feel, to touch. Sense perceptions.

Against the background of stillness. Which is another aspect of presence. Alert stillness.

Sense perceptions happen here. And when you're not thinking about the last moment. Or looking to the next one.

And after you've heard a sentence, a string of words. There's simply spacious stillness. Just as in the speaker, this form sitting on a chair.

There's stillness between the words. I don't know what the next word is going to be. How could I know?

And there's no need to know. You may have noticed already. We don't have an agenda here.

A big folder, which tells you what we're going to do this weekend. We're going to get through these 20 points. In other words, there seems to be a lack of structure.

And that is true. There is a lack of mind-made structure. And yet, a different kind of structure is growing organically out of the present moment.

And it knows where it's going. So you may have realized already. How important.

The stillness is. In this room. The external stillness.

Which we could call silence. And there's a lot of it. Despite the words.

And the inner stillness. Which simply means... What does that mean, inner stillness?

It means, and this is the secret. Consciousness. Conscious.

Without thought. A state of great intelligence. Not that thought is not going to operate ever again.

But that becomes your home. Your... The foundation.

What you're rooted in. Is that dimension of inner stillness. That is there.

In the background. It is the background to everything that happens. And that's already in you, of course.

But most humans are so identified with what happens in the foreground of their existence. Sense perceptions, events, experiences, thoughts, emotions. Everyone drawing attention.

Everything that happens externally draws you. The world does that. This matters.

And you believe that. It matters absolutely. And then the next thing matters even more.

And then the phone call comes along. This is really serious. And mostly every thought likes to matter.

Take me seriously, says every thought. Think, think. And even psychologists who are not interested in presence or anything like that have examined the human mind and realized that 99% of our thinking is totally repetitive.

And yet, it's serious. So that's being lost. When only the foreground, whatever happens in your life, and the foreground of your life includes thoughts and emotions, and external things, when that absorbs all your attention continuously, one thing after another, or as one of my favorite quotes says, Churchill said, one damn thing after another.

He was talking about world history, but he could have been talking about the human mind. It's the same. The outer reflects the inner.

One damn thing after another. One damn thought after another. And of course, nobody can argue with the fact that this is true, because if you read world history, you can see that it is one dreadful thing after another.

And if you look at your own mind, when you're lost in it, it's not a pleasant place. Occasionally pleasant thoughts can happen, and then quickly they turn around and have another face. Like, dislike.

Honeymoon, divorce. So being lost is a normal state. Lost out there, lost in here.

There's only that dimension then to your life. We could call it, what happens. I'm only interested in what happens.

And complaining about what's not happening where it should be happening. Of course, it's not happening in the right way, ever. And yet, there is in you a dimension that frees you from total identification with the world, which includes the mind.

And when you become conscious of that dimension, that's presence. When I say

conscious of that dimension, language creates a duality that isn't there. That's what language does.

Because you become conscious of that dimension as yourself. As the essence of who you are. So that's not two, but one.

And this begins simply by acknowledging, as we sit here, the dimension of silence, which is inner stillness. Simply to notice that there is, apart from the words, there is silence. In other words, the words are the foreground, the silence is the background.

And when you notice that there is silence in between and underneath the words, that moment of noticing is the arising of presence in you. The moment you notice silence, you become still inside. It's only because you became still inside that you can even notice that there is silence, apart from the words.

The strange thing is, thought cannot even notice that there is silence, because thought is noise. So if I ask you the question, can you find out if there is silence in this room, apart from the words? If you want to truly answer that question, you have to go, yes.

But while you went, you were not thinking, there was an alert presence. Then, of course, when you said yes, that was thought again. That's all right.

So whenever you notice, and not only as we sit here, but you may already have noticed, and if you have, that's a clear sign that presence is arising in you. You may already have noticed that there is quite a lot of silence around here, even if you step outside. Especially if you've come from a city, you may notice that strongly, that there is, or in your room, oh, it's very silent here.

And if you didn't notice that, it means how could you have noticed it if you'd not, for that moment at least, that's enough. There was no thought. If there had been thought, continuous stream of thinking, which is still the destiny of many humans, their fate, you would not even have known it, or without knowing it, you would have felt uncomfortable, very uncomfortable.

And you would have jumped to the TV set, if you have one in your room. By the way, I recommend strongly that you don't use it. You would have jumped to the TV set and put it on.

Ah, it's nice. And you didn't even know why you felt uncomfortable. But if you noticed it, who noticed it?

Not you, the mind-made entity, the egoic entity. No. Something deeper in you or presence, the stillness in you noticed it, otherwise you would not have noticed it.

Someone was visiting Thailand. He told me he was visiting monasteries and he climbed

up this hill a long, long way from any city. On the hill he saw a beautiful monastery.

He climbed up this hill. He arrived at the top of the hill, entered the monastery. Silence, absolute silence.

Monks walking around. He said, this is paradise. I'm going to stay here.

And suddenly, cheap loudspeakers started coming on that were hidden in the trees with the Thai version of kind of pop songs. He said, this cannot be. This cannot be.

And he ran to a monk and said, what is happening? He said, we're expecting a group of lay devotees from Bangkok and they become very uncomfortable when it's totally silent here. So to make them feel better we put on that music.

So my friend, the pilgrim went on to it wasn't paradise. It never is external. If you look at it externally.

So the people from Bangkok complained. There was so much mental noise. It became uncomfortable.

So one of the things here during our retreat essential absolutely is to notice the silence. Not only while we come together here. Also when you walk from one building to another.

When you're in your room or going for a walk in nature. Notice the background of silence because in nature you have some yes, beautiful gentle sounds and you hear those you pay attention to that. But you also pay attention to the underlying silence.

Then that dimension arises in you. And you can walk there as a field a walking field of stillness. A large stillness.

And no longer walking there carrying the heaviness of your mind the noise factory and the heaviness of your personal history that you need to think about while you're walking in nature. Your problematic life situation. The dilemma of your existence.

There's no life situation that is not problematic and if it's not problematic right now wait a little and it will turn problematic again. Because whenever you're only identified with that level, that dimension everything is problematic. And if it's not now it will become problematic.

I gave the example of the honeymoon. The honeymoon is not problematic and a little later it turns into problematic. The great job that you've just got with a big paycheck is not problematic and a year later you become sick with stress.

Or there's so much infighting that it becomes hell. Or in many ways in which situations can turn around and become problematic again and that's the one damn thing after another. And that's the truth of Buddha who said wherever you go whatever you do

whoever you meet whatever situation you go into whatever place, whatever anything, it's dukkha, suffering.

If it's not suffering now it's dukkha. And of course he talked about being lost in the world. So one our practice here to notice the silence.

And noticing is enough. Then thoughts come back and then again there's more alertness. You'll notice as you'll hear a continuous shift probably between thoughts arising and presence.

And if it's only if it's 90% thoughts and 10% presence that's great already because we're in an evolutionary shift. So the new is arising in you. But as presence arises the ability to witness thoughts so that thoughts don't overpower you completely grows.

Before in the absence of presence every thought has you completely in its grip. And the emotion usually comes with it that goes with that thought. And then as presence arises comes the ability to notice your thoughts in the same way that you notice a noise, an external noise.

And then you may notice oh there's a lot of noise up here. The noticing comes always from presence from the stillness. So when you notice that your mind is noisy wow it's noisy how do you know that?

Because you have some access to the emotion that is unconditioned the consciousness that is unconditioned which is presence the unconditioned consciousness that is presence. And from there you can see oh what your mind is doing. And the mind then is no longer a serious business you can even start to smile at what it does.

It's mechanical. After a while you look through the main strategies of the mind how it tries to get your attention and so on. There you are again there it is.

And it's no longer your personal the mind becomes depersonalized. Before the mind was me. The mind and the accumulated memories that make up my personal history was me with my unfulfilled history unfulfilled and unfulfilling not enough.

And whatever strange thoughts were associated with that life passed me by unfair it treated me unfairly I missed it. Whatever thoughts you have about your personal history something went wrong in 1984 it shouldn't have happened that's why I cannot be happy now. Or you carry an identity based on an unpleasant experience that somebody did to you you survived and that's wonderful yes it was dreadful because as long as humanity is unconscious totally identified with mind they do many dreadful things so you cannot come onto this planet without experiencing dreadful things some are more dreadful than others and you suffer there's no child that doesn't suffer and yet to build an identity on the basis of past pain is a dreadful limitation to have a painful story that is the story of me and needing to think about that because you can't all think about it gradually you

might even forget and need to talk about it continuously and then see yourself as this or that you have a label for it no matter how tragic it was at the time and some awful things are happening at this very moment in certain parts of the planet no matter what it is the fact is you survived and yet the mind used it because it's always looking for a stronger sense of self it's looking for an identity it's looking for a stronger me and it can use something like that something very bad that happened to me or the other way around something very bad that I did to someone so that's guilt you identify with something that you once did and you wouldn't do it now but there you didn't know any better that's why it happened it's called unconsciousness so if you identify with unconsciousness either that came through you or what other unconscious humans did to you there you create a heavy painful sense of self a story but everybody has their story even if there's not one big traumatic event in their lives they have their own story and how liberating it is to see that it is no more than things that happened that ultimately that is not who you are you are not the accumulation of those memories or emotions that's there, yes so as presence arises you recognize that was never who you are your personal history has its place undoubtedly it happened you may have old photos to prove it it really happened and the photos at some point begin to fade even I I haven't yet reached old age but even I have photos from my childhood that are already beginning to fade they're going yellow the story is dissolving wouldn't it be strange if photos faded more quickly than the human body and after 10 years you open your photo album and there's nothing left wow, that feels good and yet there is a dimension in every human that was never really touched by what happened the eternal, timeless state of consciousness that is presence who you are underneath the form that your life takes your life situation as I sometimes call it the dilemma of your life situation you mean other people also have a dilemma I'm not the only one surely no life situation can be more problematic than mine no story is that fulfilling if you look behind even those who in the eyes of the world have made it success, fame, wealth if you look behind the facade you see there's unhappiness sometimes greater than with other people because they still think they can make it so here we are the dimension of form as this retreat center this gathering the people including also your mind the thoughts that come the emotions also comes and goes no form lasts that long before you know it this retreat is over first you look forward to it and then it's there but since the world of form is governed by time which is ultimately illusion just as form is ultimately illusion life is like an express train it never stops, you're on it and so one event goes past there's the retreat it is it's over already it's Sunday and it's time to go home and that's what form if we could see truly see reality external reality so called we would be shocked deeply shocked by truly see I mean the way we perceive it is as if the world around us were solid the buildings the structures economic companies corporations, political even the people have their job and their pension scheme and everything is in place and it's very solid reality and it's sometimes another example of solid reality is that death is a taboo even now in western culture because it would show you that human bodies are not solid they dissolve continuously around you but you mustn't look at death it's forbidden to see dead bodies we say no, it wasn't death and

when it comes to people they react as if they never knew that such a thing existed

[Speaker 2] (54:03 - 54:04)

he died

[Speaker 1] (54:17 - 1:06:18)

and nobody told them that it was some abstract strokes in the head everybody does, ok everybody does but they live as if that were not the case at all it's sometimes helpful to travel to India where they don't have a taboo and you see dead people openly and it's the same here they're dying everywhere but they're shut away don't look pretend that nothing is happening another way why India is so wonderful to go to and it's spiritually beautiful experience is that the world of form is less predictable there here you have timetables and the trains run and everything but here it's what's going on nothing goes as planned and it's miraculously in the end it works as one Indian man said to me we live by grace he was talking to an Israeli person and the Israeli person they asked what do you live by asked the Israeli no, can't remember who asked the first question the Indian man asked the Israeli man what do you live by and the Israeli man said we live by guts and then he asked the Indian man oh, no, we live by grace and there you see that the structures of the external world are not that stable after all and of course it's the same here it's an illusion the stability is an illusion and sometimes a structure that looks so permanent crumbles whether it's the communist system or whether it's a building or you lose your job or your corporation suddenly the multi-billion dollar corporation collapses with your pension plan and everything now if you what we see is a kind of frozen view frozen view of the external world if you saw a more realistic perspective a speeded I would suggest a speeded up version on film you sometimes see it how a flower opens they speed up the film withering and disappearing and if you could see in that way a human existence baby and then running around for a few years and then growing wrinkles come like a fruit or flower that grows old and then just a little bit longer it would take before so-called physical heavy physical objects would also dissolve and become dust this room if you saw it speeded up first the bodies would go and then you have to just wait a few more seconds and then gradually you see cracks appearing things start falling down from the ceiling and then the ceiling collapses and then there is only dust left and then the wind comes so you see everything is already in the process of dissolving continuous birth and death and humans are stuck in there somewhere this is reality here now when you watch when you see that fact in the sublime teaching of the Buddha called impermanence you are astonished when you see it and you allow it to be it is liberating to see that to the egoic entity it is a dreadful thing don't be so negative don't talk about these things and yet if you allow that and you see how forms come and go how the entire universe is that play of forms and everything dissolves as that form something in you feels good feels very peaceful to see that how is it even possible to see it to witness that I talk about that briefly in Stillness Speaks the book if the entire world

were blue you would not see the colour blue not blue so that you can recognise blue if everything were impermanent you wouldn't even know it how can you know impermanence because there is something in you that is not impermanent but it has nothing to do with your form the form is impermanent and that's the beauty of death it frees that which was trapped in the form and that is the beauty of watching and allowing the impermanent nature of the world to be even to witness death puts you in touch with the deathless formless one life one consciousness that you are so I perhaps one of these days this just came to me a film project it could be one of the most spiritual films ever made that shows how quickly things dissolve you have to it might take a few years to film it the human body the animal body flowers more quickly and conceivably one could do it artistically so that you see even the entire planet is born and dies the sun is born and dies although it looks eternal compared to the human existence presence is the only thing in you that is not a thing presence is the formless in buddhism the closest buddhism gets to using a positive term it never really uses positive original teaching I don't think ever used a positive term so that you can't form a new concept in your head the deathless realm the deathless is the term sometimes used the mind wants a more accurate definition and it says are you talking about god here? because the mind wants ah god there it is it wants to hold it hold it as a concept it's too vast you cannot hold it and then it attaches the word my to god my god or even worse the word our not yours so our practice here if you can even call it that life living life is doing it is presence begins with being attentive to silence both here and outside that dimension tonight in your room doesn't matter how long you can be aware of it you're aware of it you lose it you look at the TV screen and wonder what's going on and then you're back again present and then you look at something else that's fine in, out and our practice of course is to work with the present moment as much as possible you can go back to your normal existence when you go home you can just stay with simplify your life while you're here and pay more attention to whatever this moment presents then past and future just this there's always just this just this to be able to do that alertness is required without the alertness you cannot have just this you'll be past, future past, future is the sleep, dreamlike state of being identified with thought and then there's

[Speaker 2] (1:06:23 - 1:06:24)

oh

[Speaker 1] (1:06:30 - 1:21:50)

you wake up so you wake up twice you wake up in the morning and many times during the day you wake up out of the stream of thinking and the ability arises more and more to perceive without the interference of thought thought is there when you need it don't need to be concerned about that when you need it it'll still be there in fact it'll be much more powerful when it's truly needed for whatever purpose it is when you're not overpowered by thought you can use thought for certain purposes and inspired thinking

will happen more and more because inspired any new thought a new form a new insight a new realization can only come if you access the state of no thought out of that spacious stillness ah so life is always this moment never not this moment and so that instead of having that as an abstract truth yeah I know that life is always now and so what's next so when it's an abstract truth you say okay I've done that there's only the now okay exam question one is there only the now or is there there's only the now okay so not as an abstract as a living truth or realization wow this is actually the fullness of it this is life this moment is the fullness of life it takes because the fullness is the fullness that is there when who you are is no longer obscured by thought forms the little limited me so our practice is as I sometimes put it becoming friendly with what is what is whatever form this moment takes okay okay what does that do inside you it frees you from the form that this moment takes if you react to the form that this moment takes another form is created in you as a thought or an emotion that strengthens your being lost in form and that's why the ego likes to react because the ego is the form me if you do not react respond is a different matter to whatever is needed in this moment but your habitual state becomes allowing whatever form this moment takes to be then if action is needed it comes out of that state of intelligence which is allowing the now to be allowing life to be becoming one with life one with life which is now can only be now one with life and life lives through you and life is intelligent so when you do not resist the form that this moment takes but you allow whatever form this moment takes as the temperature in your room or the stain on the carpet or even forms that before you would have complained about it is, you can't dispute the fact that it is right now so it is you can if it needs to be changed it can be changed you talk to someone but even then there is an inner allowing of right now it is maybe I can talk to somebody and we can change it repair the heater if there is no heat but right now that's it in the most powerful spiritual practice the inner allowing you do not strengthen your own form anymore that's why the ego doesn't like that and what arises is the timeless and formless essence of who you are that's why surrender is so powerful surrender to life where is life?

here there is an ego that looks like weakness and yet that is true power, intelligence aliveness and more in many ways you can speak of it so that is perhaps two levels of practice silence noticing that and noticing what happens and be one with it rather than against it no matter what this is a relatively simple setting but also there will be challenges things will come into the know that you could complain about you could argue about be offended about feel it's a limitation but it is there is no future state if you come here hoping that by Sunday morning you will have achieved the particular state you may be disappointed because you cannot achieve something that is already the essence of who you are and that you can only discover in the present moment a few more practical things this retreat center has a few temptations that other retreat centers may not have one is the TV set leave it alone if you can it stimulates the mind once you are truly in many of you a delicate flower arising a delicate flower needs a little bit of careful treatment once presence is fully arisen you are rooted in presence you dwell in

presence it doesn't make that much difference anymore you can watch TV and the same applies to alcoholic drink that is available here and I would recommend that you don't indulge this weekend once presence is firmly established then it doesn't matter anymore not that you would want to drink large quantities then alcohol can easily the good feeling that you get after a couple of glasses is to do that you are beginning to go below the thinking level and suddenly you feel a bit more alive and the little egoic entity doesn't have that grip on you anymore it gets a little bit more loose so you are a bit more free so it gives you a sense of liberation pseudo liberation and then comes another one and another and gradually you move more and more towards unconsciousness and so this is why I don't recommend it here that's all another thing that I don't recommend you may have seen there is a big chess board out there somewhere with huge chess pieces and I would recommend there is nothing wrong with chess it's an incredible game but it does stimulate the mind there may be great chess masters who are still while they play, I don't know but when I play it it stimulates my mind I don't know it very well ok, this one is going to jump there and then you have to think three draw a head for those who want it there is a meditation and a class that incorporates movement by Kim this tomorrow morning and in the evening so you can structure your own retreat in some ways you want that as part of it some of you may want to remain silent there is a room dining room for those who do not want to speak and for those who don't find a place in the dining room where they do speak and so they have to be silent whether they want to or not we may also move into some silence perhaps spend a whole day in silence gradually reduce the amount of words that come out of our mouth more important is what goes on in the noise machine in the head you may have noticed this retreat doesn't move from beginning to more advanced and more advanced the whole essence is there every moment the rest of the retreat is not based on more I have already told you everything the rest of your retreat is deepening it's not a horizontal dimension it's a vertical dimension just sit for just a little while when this body has gone there is an empty chair here empty chairs are very beautiful so stay with the empty chair and yourself just a little while

[Speaker 2] (1:26:54 - 1:27:43)

Sunrise over the mountain spreading your light over the land Sunrise I trust that everybody is here

[Speaker 1] (1:27:44 - 1:28:44)

not just the body entire being many of you have heard the Zen, famous Zen saying chopping wood carrying water Zen is beautiful like that it doesn't explain things they say that's the Zen life chopping wood carrying water it's not surprising that many people study Zen for 20 years and still can't figure out

[Speaker 2] (1:28:44 - 1:28:45)

what it is

[Speaker 1] (1:28:54 - 1:31:47)

now, nowadays in the western world there are not that many people left who chop wood and carry water if you want heat or want to cook something you turn on the switch and for water you turn on the tap but for hundreds of years that was one of the main activities they would repeat themselves every day especially in the Zen monastery or anywhere in the world but to describe the life of the Zen monk or nun ordinary activity and discovering the extraordinary in the ordinariness of life by bringing awareness or presence to the ordinary by being aware of another dimension to the ordinary and this is something we can embrace this weekend particularly because in many ways this retreat is ordinary we are not jumping up and down or screaming in ecstasy or it could happen nor are we taking a little pill called ecstasy unless you do but you don't need it here on a similar vein somebody recently wrote a book called After the Ecstasy the Laundry I don't think he was referring to the pill but to the state of ecstasy that can sometimes come in spiritual

[Speaker 2] (1:31:49 - 1:31:50)

oh yes

[Speaker 1] (1:31:52 - 1:39:53)

and then you look around and there's the laundry put it now you may not wash it by hand anymore you put it in the washing machine so that takes the place of chopping wood and carrying water and of course there's another way of chopping wood and carrying water or putting things in the washing machine I'm fed up with chopping wood I can't stand chopping wood and carrying water anymore it's the same every day and is this going to go on for years for the rest of my life do I have to chop wood carry water do my laundry for the rest of my life I've been doing it for years already I can't stand it anymore and then you still chop wood and carry water but it doesn't feel good and you'd rather be doing something else you're not there you're trying to get elsewhere your relationship to the present moment is one of almost hostility and you carry in a simple activity you carry a lot of time past because you're complaining you've been doing it for so often for so long and future because you carry projection will I have to do this for the rest of my life and so that interferes with what could be a moment of great fullness and depth because you're carrying time into this and you're carrying a self into it a complaining self a me that separates itself from the now is not one with it so the meaning then of chopping wood and carrying water is not to carry past or future into this moment and even if you've chopped wood and carried water for 25 years it's never happened before if you don't carry the memory of 25 years of chopping wood into this moment this moment is totally fresh and new and it's alive and there's a depth to it that you hadn't seen before of aliveness in the ordinariness and this of course is another Zen

saying which this little saying is to explain the meaning of Zen again and it's very short what is Zen? they asked the master doing one thing at a time that can't be all but there's great depth and power if you're able to do one thing truly one thing at a time first of all it implies there's no past and future in the action it also implies that the action is not a means to an end in the normal state of consciousness you chop wood in order to light the fire with the wood so in ordinary consciousness mentally you're already on the desired outcome the present moment of chopping wood is your stepping stone that enables you to get where you want to get which is light the fire to cook the food and of course once you have lit the fire and you're cooking the food you're not there either because you're already eating it mentally you're already waiting for the moment when you can finally eat it and so on you're never there always the next step ahead always the moment is a means is reduced in value reduced in aliveness to a means to an end and the end is always a concept in the head so you get your whole life becomes reduced through becoming imprisoned in a conceptualized reality because that's all that future is a mental concept a word a thought future has no reality nobody has ever seen it touched it smelled it nobody has ever been there and nobody can ever be there when it comes it's always the now so in the service of a mental concept called future you reduce what could be the fullness of life to a mere stepping stone you reduce its value its aliveness to that because you're interested in the next moment so you're chopping wood and carrying water but really you're not there doing it you would rather get this out of the way in order to arrive at the next moment that's the normal way to live and that is not doing one thing at a time because you're already mentally elsewhere the other thing or many a sequence of things that you will have to do later even worse you're doing one thing and in your mind you already have not only what where you want to get with this one thing because that will have to lead to that and that and that and the whole you have piled up in your mind the things that you have to do today and each one clambering for importance so your attention is absorbed by that and the minimum of it flows into what you do and that's called stress stress stress means one thing pulls this way the other pulls you can have stress in metal when there's a pull one pull this way and the other pulls that way and that happens inside people continuously the future pulls you away and it hurts it hurts the body if the body could speak it would say what the hell are you doing what are you doing to me are you insane and sometimes the last resort of the body is the body says i have to make this guy ill because he will never stop and finally your only chance of recovery is to become ill

[Speaker 2] (1:39:59 - 1:40:04)

so and so

[Speaker 1] (1:40:07 - 1:49:37)

chopping wood carrying water points to the possibility of not neither bringing past and future into this present moment also not making whatever you're doing right now into a

means to an end where the end result that you want to achieve becomes more important than what you're doing now and realize there is no future there's always only the now and to reduce that to a means to an end is insane ultimately is already a form of insanity and when millions of people live like that what kind of a civilization do they create and the whole civilization is based on that dysfunction so millions of people are running around hyperactive stress increases every year in society everybody talks about it they even feel guilty if they're not stressed maybe I'm not doing enough stress increases every year and everybody's running around there's never enough time not enough time to do it all a piling up of future things and the children are conditioned at an early age to live in the same mad way as their parents come on let's get on with it and if you stop anybody ask them what's the whole purpose of your running around like mad well nobody really knows or they would tell you well explain the situation where are they running to internally or externally running well I have to achieve this there's a deadline I've got deadlines to meet I mean I can't even talk to you don't stop me now this is normal the world is full of deadlines these days I sometimes have to write little things here and there and there's always but you only have two days you have to do it in two days often I don't either they wait or it doesn't get done Kim is nodding her head I'm not allowing this world to drive me insane because the world will do it because the world is the externalized human mind so here can be used this situation this weekend for our practice of discovering the depth that is concealed in the ordinary moment seemingly ordinary moment it can be used this weekend and see if we can in whatever we do and what we do is not it's bound to be simple here because there isn't much that you can do that is to the mind really important your business or whatever it is hopefully you've switched off your cell phones so they can't get at you the world can't get at you and in the little things that we do here see if we can bring so much attention to it there's no strain in it just to that we don't reduce it to a means to an end whatever we do and that's a reversal of ordinary consciousness and that begins for example with when you walk from here to another building or when you go for a walk in nature you walk from here to your room or you walk from here to the door or even in your room where you walk to the door to the bathroom and so on there's a step walking implies a sequence of steps and usually when people walk even in that little seemingly simple way mentally they are where they want to get so there's already the projection so you're being pulled away by future and you're always running after the next thing where the mind has projected itself and there's another way to simply be at the step you're taking at this moment now at first it's a strange way to become aware of yourself walking you don't have to call it a meditation although there is such a thing as walking meditation they do it even more slowly you can do that but just ordinary walking it may well be yes that you walk more slowly than you would normally do a bit more because normally you're okay so you just simply awareness in each step and it's always one you can only take one step at a time ever so even to say each step is not right because there is not each step there's only the one you're taking at this moment ever in life and to become aware of that one step that something happens then and we could call that quality and that's very hard to define

that word came to me many many years ago I saw a Buddhist monk who lived in presence and he was walking up and down and he said oh I can see there's so much quality in his walking ordinary consciousness is concerned with quantity and the entire civilization is concerned with quantity more need more quality is rare because the next moment is what matters you've got conveyor belts churning out things and quality implies full attention and then there is there's also peace that comes with each step yes as you practice walking in that way you may find yourself walking a little bit more slowly than you would normally do and then you realize it does not really depend on speed once you are able to bring presence into the step the one step you're taking at this moment the speed doesn't matter it doesn't matter when the step it's always one step and if you have to run which may occasionally happen you may have to catch a train and you're late and you have to run then you see you feel the enormous energy of that moment as a joyful movement without the pull of I need to catch that train no, I'm just running it's beautiful and there's high energy or you can let's stay with walking for a while

[Speaker 2] (1:49:39 - 1:49:48)

before you do something else laughing

[Speaker 1] (1:50:01 - 1:53:39)

and that's you will be amazed how peaceful it is to be aware of the step that you take at this moment and then you walk also in nature out there and then you learn to have some awareness there and some awareness in other sense perceptions the walking can keep you present with each step and you look around and there you have another teacher this weekend which is called nature because nature is present in the now one with life everything in nature is one with life and so you bring awareness to nature as you walk around now nature that surrounds us here is of a particular kind some forms of nature are overwhelming huge gigantic mountains raging streams or the sea shore with gigantic waves and a storm coming in and sometimes nature can be so overpowering overwhelming that it sweeps away your thinking you can't think anymore it's so gigantic that it sweeps away your thoughts and it forces you some especially if you there is some danger involved you are at a precipice and it's stormy and there are gigantic mountains there and clouds coming this way and your mind stops wow and there is an enormous sense of aliveness suddenly so occasionally it can happen that nature forces you into presence but here nature is of a different kind the other kind of nature that I just described is almost like taking LSD which I tried once because there the sense perceptions become amplified it's as if everything sounds visual sense touch smell as if they were all shouting at you overwhelming you get bombarded by heightened sense perception so much that for some people it's the first time their first experience of not thinking because you are so bombarded with sense perceptions you can't think anymore it can be an opening you are not growing in consciousness but it can be a glimpse of

something what how alive the world can be and so people go and they look at a teapot and say

[Speaker 2] (1:53:39 - 1:53:39)

wow

[Speaker 1] (1:53:45 - 2:01:14)

or any ordinary object even a bare wall it's almost pulsating with life and the mind stops and you feel what I lived in in some kind of prison all my life and so the world is alive and then gradually it wears down what was all that for some people that becomes an incentive to for some people that has been the beginning of their quest there is more than my mind there is greater depth to reality than my mind and so you have nature that can sometimes stop your mind because it's so overwhelming but here this is not the case and here this brings us back to chopping wood and carrying water nature here is beautiful but relatively ordinary it's the trees of medium height it's not like a forest in Canada where you go oh my god when you reach the seashore it's not the open ocean so the waves are not that huge they're just little waves so it's not it's not a place where there are extremes maybe the Buddha would have liked it here so you bring and this is an opportunity for bringing presence to the ordinariness beauty but also the seeming ordinariness of nature and then look for what you would normally have overlooked what the wind does to the blades of grass when you look what it does to the leaves in place where the branches and the leaves might make a slight sound now to notice that you need alertness to notice a chunk a gigantic chunk of ice falling from a glacier in the Swiss Alps you don't need very much presence there's an explosive sound and it comes tumbling towards you but for that subtleness greater alertness is required otherwise you'll miss it and so there's such alertness that you're not interpreting what you see you're not saying the wind is playing with the grass no it's just what is and there's a depth and a beauty there and a stillness in it that you can't explain nor do you need to and then you look at a patch of ground right in front of you grass and perhaps two or three kinds of flowers some are yellow some are white some are red that take a few hours before they open completely after sunrise because at night they go when the sun comes it takes two or three hours before they're completely open and you watch that also some movement there and you discover things that you haven't seen before that there's enormous life even in one square metre and you bring awareness presence to that and then you walk and you see a grove of trees or whatever it is and you perceive the totality of that landscape as a total field in which intense aliveness is happening so to bringing that to nature then what nature is teaching you is the state of no mind no thought although nature is pre-mind it hasn't arrived at mind you are post-mind but you meet in the state of no mind it has similarities nature is one with itself and with the totality every animal is one with itself it doesn't separate itself out of the totality it says me maybe there may be a few exceptional mad dogs that lived for too long with humans

and go to take them to the hairdresser and when they walk around you can see there's beginnings of an ego there and ego of course means having a self image me like a phantom self walking next to me and then you're aware of others how they react to me and that becomes incorporated into me i want others to think well of me to admire me to to feel that i'm better than they are if possible with a continuous fear that i may be less than they so but nature when

[Speaker 2] (2:01:14 - 2:01:15)

it's left alone

[Speaker 1] (2:01:16 - 2:29:36)

is free of that and even most pets are still free of it miraculously or they've lived with humans for so long miraculously they're still sane and they are what keeps many humans sane if they didn't have their pet it's their only access to being because anything else their mind is in charge they meet other humans their mind is in charge for the rest of their life they're burdened by themselves and for some humans their only area of freedom is when the pet comes and they go they don't have to they're not playing a game with their pets they're just themselves because they know that the pet accepts them the dog does not criticize you the dog accepts you accepts the most insane master i have a little saying god please make me into the person my dog thinks i am and of course the dog doesn't think if it thought it would be the beginning of a problem so nature everything in nature the flower which jesus i'm sure said many many times he said look at the flowers they're not concerned about tomorrow they're not making effort they're not stressed they're not worried they live in the now unfold in the now and life supports them beautifully and why do you live when you live you're mad learn from the flowers how to live and he said look although in the bible it says consider the lilies i'm sure what he said was look and then something transmits itself and that is the state of being aligned at one with life the integrity that is there in nature in an animal and in a plant and even in a mineral although mineral seems more distant from humans but humans have all that within themselves still the integrity integrity that word means being one with one being rooted in being not existing as a separate fearful entity that feels disconnected from the universe and that the ego it's me and there's the rest of the universe and of course then the universe is a fearful place because it's so much bigger than me although i'm trying to get bigger so nature teaches to be now when you be when you enter being it has an added dimension of intensity and depth because you've been through thought for thousands of years you've gone through the level the consciousness level we call it thought you then go beyond thought and you touch being again but this time you know it before you lost being you never really lost it but it became obscured before you lost being to be at one with being was like every animal and every plant it's natural there's nothing else so you didn't really know that you were in paradise because it was the only there was nothing else the state of oneness was

natural and then it got obscured or lost you could call it and then suddenly you come to the end of this evolutionary cycle and you touch being again and this time you know it the depth of it consciously you enter being and yet nature can teach you being not that you become the same as a vegetable there's nothing wrong with vegetables but it's not the destiny of humans to become vegetable again the vegetable is beautiful more closer to the source than an ordinary human has no problem with dying and no problem with living the only unhappiness on the planet is the human mind yes the human mind causes suffering to other life forms pain that is right but the human mind is the only source of unhappiness on the planet nature exists in the state of unity and so nature teaches us not through any concept simply by placing awareness on anything natural you become still animal ground clouds flowing water or still water or sea whatever it is even a rock a stone a pebble but you have to give it a chance to teach you stillness by allowing it to be without interfering with its being through conceptualization by looking or listening completely then also the separation between you and it which was created by excessive thinking disappears and there is a sense of connectedness or oneness with whatever you perceive so that's what nature teaches you and then you meet and you add something to nature when you become conscious of it something completes itself because you become aware of enormous beauty and aliveness and sacredness that is there even a blade of grass and so through you because there is ultimately you are not separate from anything everything is connected to everything else through you nature becomes aware of its own sacredness and beauty so when you look at a tree and really look you add something to the being of the tree and that's awareness of itself and that's the function that humans have on the planet as they become conscious through humans nature becomes conscious of itself it's been waiting for you and finally the first humans fully developed humans humans arrive and they are only just arriving one could almost say humans have been in embryonic state for a long time and the birth is really of true humanity does not happen until there is the arising of presence there are still a few humans left on the planet who are not yet lost in mind and ego just a few in a few very distant cultures that have not been destroyed by so called civilization but their destiny also I believe is to go will have to travel the same way as you through the thinking mind so it's the destiny of all humans to lose it and then regain it now you are lucky because you all belong to those who lost it and me too I had to lose it lose myself to find myself and know myself for the first time we spoke of walking petals falling we spoke of walking we spoke of being with what looks like unremarkable nature and yet is very remarkable let it teach you and related to that is as our practice this weekend other simple activities that you do here that usually would be a means to an end that you would washing your hands lifting a glass of water to your mouth and putting it back there can be quality beauty and consciousness in that that means that it's not a means to an end and during that space while the glass travelled from the table to your mouth it's a space of no thought just clear awareness so the background to that action is stillness alert stillness so that action happens against that background of alert stillness just as the perception of the tree or the little flower happens when you truly look against a background of alert

stillness that means there is a peace in the background to what happens in your life to what you see and what you do now we start with very simple things that are not challenging that are actually helpful nature and little actions then we come to things that are more challenging let's see that first we'll stay with non-challenging things in life simple actions not making them to a means to an end lifting something putting something from here to there wiping the top of the table against a background of stillness that means peace flows into what you do so you have to see putting on your shoes tying the shoelaces if you have shoelaces and again being fully there not a means to an end the moment of having your shoes finally on your feet is not more important than the moment of putting your shoes on that's a delusion that the next moment is more important it's no difference whether I have my shoes on or off it doesn't improve my life to have the shoes on another thing is eating eating is a primordial activity that even very early life forms engage in even life forms that can't that have relatively undeveloped organs of perception they are eating already and sometimes it's the only thing they are interested in and so many human beings become completely unconscious when they start eating even you can have I've seen intellectuals at universities professors talking the most complex concepts and then they start eating and then they finish and then okay now let's get back to the problem of existentialist analysis of Immanuel Kant theory of the critique of pure reason so to bring consciousness into that primordial activity and sometimes to just be conscious of chewing food and swallowing food and again not wanting to arrive at the end because that's another needing some people have a so called problem with eating it's not really a problem but they eat more than they need to eat and that's usually the it's the egoic mind needing more and that can translate itself into taking in more food it could be other things often it's other things so just if you have a problem with eating so called problems many humans have that these days it's helpful to well the impulse to eat comes in between meals to simply notice it now at what stage you catch the impulse and it's not only eating this would apply to any so called addiction smoking at some point the impulse comes and it's an unconscious movement I need to take something in it's with smoke smoking or drink and the impulse comes to there's a lack here I need and you have to observe it on an energetic level inside yourself don't detach yourself by some thought really feel the grasping of it the neediness of it I need and now how soon you catch that impulse no matter what it is depends how alert you are at the moment at that moment how present you are because the impulse very quickly can pull you into unconsciousness and some people wake up after they've taken the big sandwich out of the fridge and eaten it and then they realize they've just been eating a big sandwich and while they were eating the big sandwich the mind was somewhere completely different and then as you become more present you can catch yourself the moment your hand is in the fridge and then you feel the grasping the impulse and then you stop for a moment and observe that you don't stop and think oh I shouldn't be eating another sandwich no that doesn't work you simply observe the feeling behind it the lack the sense of needing to be filled that is behind it and that needing to be filled is not a physical thing it may appear as a physical

thing but it is a psychological thing and it's created by the ego which is always in a state of not enough and others may be running after other things and for some people it becomes food maybe other things for them also they need more of something to fill that which feels unfulfilled so I need to more and then you have the hand in the fridge and and then for a moment you can stop and feel it observe what what is behind that impulse isn't that interesting and you spend a minute or two being present with that and after that you may still eat it or you may not sometimes it's gone the desire is gone because you become conscious at other times maybe it's still there and you still can't stop yourself but you have brought presence to it and each time you bring presence to something that before was unconscious presence grows even if on an external level you might say I did not succeed I did have to and the cigarette comes saying if you need to smoke for a moment you observe the wanting behind it and what the wanting behind it feels like and how it's almost something that lives in you that wants you to grasp at this now and you there's a gap and you bring presence to that and then whether you smoke or not or eat or don't really is secondary the success is really determined by whether you can be the witness of your inner state at that moment that's all what you then do externally is always secondary you cannot not change if you bring presence to whatever is there so you don't need to work on the external level as achieving particular kind of behavior it's enough to observe what is here now and so for some people that is the beginning of their spiritual path the beginning of their spiritual path can be an addiction food drink drug and then creating suffering in their lives because it gets the body becomes ill and then forces them into awareness so any such thing in your life is also helpful it's not a hindrance anymore and it's included in what is now what can you do that's what you feel at this moment it is it's included in your bringing a yes to this moment an enormous longing for another drink that's what is and you watch and there is suddenly a dimension another dimension to it the watcher the presence the formless consciousness and there is the form that impulse that desire that thought that emotion and the space around it that's who you are so the more you accept that it's there the more the space around it grows so to speak spaciousness comes into your life so our three practices it's more than that we'll just give it a little structure our three practices the walking there's a teacher whose name I can never pronounce Tick that town or something like that who has this beautiful saying the miraculous thing something like that is the miraculous thing is to take one peaceful step peace in every step that's truly that is the not what we imagine miracles are this is the miraculous thing of bringing peace into this step that I'm taking this moment there's never anything else so that's what we work with nature and simple actions including eating handling things getting dressed undress not a means to an end an end in itself the next moment is not more significant than this one this one is the only one there is and so you become a field of presence which is peace and that flows into what you do and that does something to how you do it to your actions the way you walk the way you put something from here to there something flows into the doing that is a different energy from the energy that flows into it when you reduce it to a means to an end the doing becomes more intelligent

this is the real meaning of right action that we have in Buddhism right action is not something that you need to or can practice but something that flows out of being present with what is if you are not present you can try to have right action for the rest of your life for another 50 years I am trying right action just as Christians say I am trying to love my neighbor it's hard

[Speaker 2] (2:29:36 - 2:29:36)

very hard

[Speaker 1] (2:29:36 - 2:35:25)

just have to try right action or loving your neighbor as yourself comes out of the state of presence naturally flows out of that and the state of presence is to be with what is don't make it into a means to an end surrender to now surrendered state of consciousness one with life and as I may have mentioned yesterday the little question that you may sometimes want to ask yourself the question doesn't point to the ultimate truth but it's an intermediate stage what is my relationship to the present moment ultimately you are one with it but what is my relationship to the present moment you can even if you like things like that you can put it on as a little sticker on your bathroom mirror and the bedroom so that when you wake up and your fridge the TV set right on top on the screen and so when you go towards and then of course you may notice because you just wanted to switch on the hypnotic machine what is my relationship to the present moment I want to get away from it away from myself and again what I described the impulse that comes when there is some kind of so called addiction TV can be very addictive and again there comes the impulse that you can observe in yourself that needing to watch more both the impulse to go there and switch it on the moment you arrive home and the and you can observe the resistance to switching it off once it's on you can observe the mind's desire for more expressing itself as when you say ok it's time to go to bed and then you pick up the remote and instead of pressing the off button you say ok let's just try the other that channel and then that draws you in for a few minutes and then it goes to the off again ok let's try just that one and then another and just flick through it's a need the mind wants more stimulus and you can observe that you can observe when you go to a waiting room at the doctor or the dentist and you pick up a magazine the hungriness the hunger behind looking through the pages and you can observe it in others more easily than in yourself when they flick the pages they are consuming the magazine the mind is consuming the magazine hungrily they stay with each page for a few seconds occasionally there's a little thing that catches their attention for a minute and it's very helpful if you can observe that in yourself it's all to do with the mind grasping for more that this moment isn't full enough I need to put something some more into me I saw a few newspapers around here maybe better to leave them alone but observe the desire to go there and open it or if you're lucky it's in Danish and some of many of you don't know Danish so that's okay I observed a man not

here he was picking up a newspaper really enormous interest and beginning to read it and suddenly he threw it away in disgust and I said what's wrong?

he said it's yesterday's paper I just saw the date on it

[Speaker 2] (2:35:42 - 2:35:43)

completely worthless

[Speaker 1] (2:35:56 - 2:37:11)

so modern humans have become consumers of all kinds of things the mind they don't only they consume on every level they consume the news they consume entertainment the big one entertainment a word that was even unknown not long ago entertainment but again in the romantic industry occasionally you get the truth shining through some of it is rare but it can happen but a lot of the time it's pain body entertainment this is so bad I love it that's the pain body this film will make you feel really bad and then they all come to watch it to feed their pain bodies through watching dreadful things films made by pain bodies for pain bodies

[Speaker 2] (2:43:05 - 2:44:01)

we are another new morning we celebrate we are the new man sunrise Over the mountain, spreading your light, over the land, sun

[Speaker 1] (2:44:01 - 3:34:09)

Tibetan bells, spiritual alarm clock. I know most of you are awake already, but it is after lunch. In the morning you wake up, and then during the day you wake up many times.

Into presence, out of thought, into presence. As we sit here, as you sit here, can you sense your own presence? That's not a very good way of putting it, because it's not your own.

You don't even exist as a separate entity. As separate from the totality. Can you sense, but let's just for the moment put it like that.

Can you sense your own presence? Throughout the body, because presence is not a head phenomenon. Head is part of it, but so are the toes, and the entire energy field.

But presence is a whole body phenomenon, or it transcends the body, and it's not part of the phenomenal world. But whatever words we use come from the phenomenal world, so it's okay. So there is something that one cannot grasp.

So here it is, because if you say here it is, you've made an object out of it, in consciousness. A concept, an idea, here it is. And yet presence is consciousness itself, so

you can never say here it is, always saying here it is.

All you can say is here I am, as presence. There's also, presence is not confined to the inner, ultimately it's just an artificial division between inner and outer. There's presence in the room, a field of presence, so it's within and without.

So this is an entry point into presence, is the feeling of your inner energy field. Alive, cells are alive. When you feel that, you can't think very much.

The moment you start to think, you lose that, because consciousness moves up, and you're up here. It's quite possible that body awareness was one of the original teachings of the Buddha. Some people claim that, nobody ultimately knows.

There are some sutras that point to that. As is probably the awareness of breathing. They are closely connected, because if you follow your breath with your attention, your attention moves into the body.

And you can then feel parts of the body as you follow your breath with your attention, as you breathe in. It seems almost as if the breath were reaching even into your legs or feet, although science would probably tell you, well you're not actually breathing into your legs. But if the attention moves there.

Whenever you are tortured by obsessive thoughts, or any kind of thoughts, a never ending stream of pointless thinking, which is most of the time. Use the entry point, use the inner body as an entry point into presence. And you may notice, the first thing, if the mind is very active, or you're faced with a challenging situation, and the mind wants to react out of its old conditioning.

The mind will say, I can't be present in the moment, not now, I can't be present now, not now. Wait until I feel a little better, until things have changed, I haven't got the time now. Can't even think about it, can't be present now, and then you do it anyway.

Feel your hands, arms, feet. Take a few deep breaths, and follow the breath with your attention into the body. And quickly you feel an aliveness in the inner energy field, and there's your anchor or presence.

And then presence becomes a globalized sense of aware aliveness. And there you are. And a few minutes ago the mind told you that you can't do it.

If you believe that thought every time it comes, then you'll never go into the body, because faith, I'll do it some other time. I have too much on my mind now. And there you are.

So this is to practice. Also when things are easy in your life, like now, relatively easy, except for one or two people who may have an ache or a pain. And that's okay,

somewhere in the body, the other parts of the body that are fine, there's still the global feeling of aware presence.

So there is sensing yourself as that presence here. Then you are, your awareness is then partly here, in here, so to speak, and partly on the outer world. Which at this moment is not challenging, it's helpful, that's good.

You can hear the words, you can perceive the room perfectly well, you can see the flowers, the lights, aware of everything. But aware also of the presence that you are, without which nobody would be aware of this room and this voice. It wouldn't even be there, it would just be atoms and molecules floating around, with mostly empty space in between.

So you create this world as the conscious presence, every moment. But don't lose yourself in the creation. But since that has happened, that also had its place and its purpose.

God as yourself, the one consciousness, the one life, must have wanted to lose itself in the creation and then wake up. And then know him, her, itself. It's a cosmic thing, not just a little personal, it's huge, we are part of something huge.

So as you sit here, some awareness is within the aliveness, the presence that you are, as the consciousness in which whatever you perceive appears. And that means you are deeply rooted in being. And the rest is existence.

Being is that which is not manifested as a form, the underlying one life. Existence is that, the word already tells you that, it's that which stands out. Ex is from Latin, stands out, ex, out.

So that which exists is a form that comes out of the unmanifested and manifests. As a thought, as a body, as a solar system, a galaxy, or blade of grass, or microbe. So existence is whatever you can perceive with the senses and beyond.

There are other things that you cannot perceive, it's also existence. Spirit presences also exist. Devas, nature spirits, exist, although most humans can't sense these things, see them anymore.

Gods probably exist. Gods, beings, angels, whatever you want to call them, all kinds of entities. And yet they are also, they exist, they may be deeply rooted in being.

They may not be under the illusion that they are separate little entities. And yet they also exist, they perhaps, they can be and exist at the same time. They can be rooted in this one source of all life, and be out as an acting agent in the sense-perceived world.

And we are learning that also. Nature, which we mentioned this morning, also is rooted

deeply in being, but at an earlier stage. Natural connectedness with being without yet knowing it fully.

So this is a very powerful way of connecting with being, connecting with your body. It's more than body. The invisible life that animates the body, the intelligence field.

And then it's so much easier to go about this world without needing to label everything immediately. As soon as it enters your field of perception, some automatic thing comes into motion that comments on it, and interprets it immediately to fit into what I need and what I want and what my story is and what my likes and dislikes are, and immediately you have a running commentary on everything you see. It's a bit like the, almost like the robot from the future in some of these films by our friend Arnold.

And so this robot from the future comes, and then sometimes the viewer of the film looks through his eyes, and whenever he sees a new situation, his field of vision is like a computer screen, and then the computer screen analyzes the situation. Male weighing such and such, height approaching at such and such a speed, carrying a submachine gun, level of threat nine, and all kinds of quick analysis. Now if anybody had to do that, they would be very slow.

If you had to analyze analytically every situation, imagine driving a car like that. That's why even the most powerful computer in the world cannot yet drive a car from A to B in a small town. Just can't do it.

And a human doesn't need to be particularly intelligent, it seems, to be able to do that. But this breaking it down into little bits of information is almost how the human mind, the conditioned mind, when you are lost in it, how it operates. You meet somebody, and immediately you start formulating opinions and judgments, and see, compare him or her with yourself, and see where he or she fits in.

Are you better, higher, more spiritual, more wealthy, better looking, stronger? Or you feel inadequate, or feel better. There's this game, and perhaps I can add her to my sense of self.

I can make her my wife, and she'll look good next to me. It sounds absurd, but that's how the mind works. And of course you're not meeting anybody at all, you're meeting your own thoughts.

Continuously you think you're interacting, you're having relationships with other human beings. You're only having a relationship with your mind. And then you marry her or him, and she has the same problem.

A little later, they can't stand each other anymore. Two minds meeting. So that compulsion to go about the world, and according to your conditioning, immediately interpret everything, and immediately have an opinion about it.

I'm always perplexed when, after somebody asks me, what do you think of this person, such and such, but perhaps I have just an edge, or whatever. Nothing. What is there to think?

If you think about their conditioning, whatever conditioned behaviour they manifest, that's only a bundle of conditioning, there's nobody there. That's not who they are. So ultimately, whatever you can think about in the other person, that's not who they are.

What you cannot think about in the other person, that's who they are. And who you are. So you don't do it, you do it to yourself, you conceptualise yourself, as an entity that consists of mental positions, and mental images, and concepts, me, story of me, and then you do it to others.

So being here as an alive presence, the pull is much less, is greatly reduced, the pull to label everything immediately. When you sense, when you're in the background, the presence that you are, the entire being that you are, you sense that as the presence, and then you perceive. Then the need to label is hardly there, still occasionally little thoughts may drift in and out, that's OK.

But to a large extent you will be able to be there as a higher intelligence, because that's what it is, the unconditioned intelligence, that is presence. And not be there as a little personalised entity that says, me. No matter how intelligent, how developed my mind is, you're still a little egoic me, wanting something, or fearing something.

And so that is particularly when you meet human beings, because we've been talking about being present with nature, being present with a tree and a flower, and look without needing to call it anything, unless you have to say something to someone. But in the act of perception, there's the background of aware stillness. And that's relatively easy, nature is not actively thinking, it's not conducive to thought, becomes more difficult when you meet humans, because most humans are noisy minds, that's who they think they are, they're walking around with nice noisy minds.

And immediately it's very challenging to meet another human being, because you're meeting, in most cases, an egoic entity, they don't know who they are, they think they are their story, and they think they need this and that to confill themselves, and they fear all kinds of things, and they interpret you through the eyes of their conditioning. And so in the interaction with humans, it's essential to be there as presence and not as a labeling mind. And so if you can sense the inner body, when you're facing another human being, somebody you've never met before, somebody you know already, it doesn't matter, somebody you're meeting very briefly, and there's a moment in which, perhaps you ask, can you tell me where such and such a street is?

I'm stopping a stranger in the street, can you tell me where such and such a street is? And he or she says, it's over there, go that way. And there's a moment of perhaps three

seconds in which you just look at him, and he says, thank you.

In that looking, there was stillness, just, thank you. There was no judging, at all. It was just a field of presence.

That means you truly met another human being, you connected at a deeper level. It's only possible when you are not lost or react to the world of form, the form of that person, which is either the person's body, or the person's external appearance, or the person's psychological form. And then you say, whatever, I don't like the way you spoke to me, or I like, I don't, a space, a space of no thought, a space of consciousness, in the interaction.

Just looking, or listening to what he or she says. But of course the awareness goes beyond the looking and the listening, there's actually the flow of energy between you. There's a totally different energy interaction that would be there in a normal interaction would be mind energy, just two minds.

And here you have a very different frequency between two humans. It's peaceful, a peaceful, alive energy field that connects them, in which they momentarily become one. And even if the other human has no idea what's going on, he or she may simply feel that you are such a nice person.

Because the human mind would then personalize it. In your presence that human being felt suddenly free, not judged. Him or herself, a bit more than usual, felt you didn't impose what normally humans impose on other humans.

Similar to a dog or a cat, but better. And so they may even invite you for a cup of tea. Come home with me for a cup of tea.

I'd like to be around you, but they may not say that because the mind is fearful of true relationship. And depending what country you're in, when you meet a stranger, you will encounter varying degrees of protectiveness, self-protectiveness of the ego. In some countries it's more open.

And this often has very simple causes, like how cold or warm it is. Because if in a cold country, generation and generation in a cold country become tight and there's tension in the body. They have to protect themselves, not only psychologically, but also physically if the two get mixed up.

And so in some countries, you talk to a stranger at a bus stop, they take two steps backwards. He's talking to a stranger. And there's a suspicion immediately, he wants something from me.

Because that's the ego thinks in those terms, he wants something from me. Smiling, in some countries it's frowned upon. You're smiling at somebody.

In some places where there's still a little bit less mind identification, they smile more. I had a friend from the Philippines and she came to England for the first time when I was living there. And the first few days and weeks, she had great difficulties because when she was walking along the street, she smiled at everybody.

And she was quite good looking, so the cars screeching to a halt, she said, come in. She didn't want to come in, she was just happy. So I had to tell her, you can't smile here.

And that's meeting strangers, being there. And then, even more challenging, meeting humans with whom you share a lot of past. The more past you share with them, the more the old behavior patterns will want to come back in.

You know that when you're in a relationship with meeting your parents, your wife, your husband, after many years of marriage, patterns get very established of who you think he is, who he thinks you are, and the way in which you interact. Or more difficult, meeting your ex-husband or your ex-wife. And be present then and there.

And be in the body. So meeting human beings without past. Not that you cannot remember certain things they did, but not to bring the past as an active operating principle into the interaction.

Meeting everyone without past. Just in this moment, through the power of this moment, which is the power of presence, which is who you are. And not meeting the other person as a walking personal history.

And that is an enormously liberating thing to do when you can meet even your mother and father, with whom quite a few people, some people have children, some people have a wonderful relationship with their mother and father, which is beautiful. Some grew up in a relatively conscious family. And many in this world did not grow up in a conscious family.

Their father and mother were manifesting varying degrees of unconsciousness. And resentment built up over the years. So many, between adult children and parents, often there's grievances, resentments, complaints.

He doesn't understand me. I get criticized all the time. He doesn't even want to understand me, my father, my mother.

And the same reactions happen every time you visit them. And then you have a fight and then you leave. And next time it happens again.

And then one day you meet them, you arrive at the doorstep and you look at them and feel the inner body at the same time. And then you come in and you sit down and you still, you look at them, still feeling the inner body because now it's vital that you're anchored. Now it's vital that you're anchored in the now.

And then you get the old thing. Your father says, are you still involved in that spiritual airy fairy nonsense? Still haven't got a job, have you?

I told you years ago you should do this and that. And then you have to be very present. And just sit there and simply say, well, yes, I'm still doing that.

But then he, if it's your father or she, if it's your mother, after a while will feel a slight disorientation because you are not feeling the old patterns anymore. You're not reacting. And his or her ego will feel there's something missing here.

And so it will be hard for them to keep up that playing out that script if the other one isn't playing anymore, isn't reacting anymore, simply stating this is how it is. And you don't even expect anything anymore because expectations that he or she should behave in a particular way to make me happy is to do with being identified with certain thoughts. That's how things should be.

He should understand me. So that I can be happy. The whole thing is an illusionary edifice.

You won't be happy even when he understands you. He won't make any real difference to you. Now he understands me, so now what?

What has changed? Nothing. He doesn't understand me, so the same, nothing.

You become free of that which you thought you needed when you were identified with thought. In presence you don't really need anything psychologically speaking. You don't need psychological this or that.

And there you are, and then you can see the patterns in your mother or father crumbling. And for the first time perhaps he or she will ask you a genuine question. What are you really into?

What is that? This has happened. People have told me these miracles happen.

And if they don't, that's fine too. It doesn't really matter. So there comes a with presence comes an acceptance, a compassionate acceptance of what is, which very often means what is, is the human being in front of you.

Be compassionate, giving them space to be, because presence is you have found your inner space or spaciousness, formless consciousness, peace, so that's the great practice is human beings with whom you have a lot of past, you share a lot of past, and maybe whether old grievances, old resistances, old judgments going on for years, and then forgiveness doesn't even need to as it becomes unimportant, you don't need to think, I want to forgive whoever it is, but I'm just trying, I just can't forgive. Or you feel, I definitely, I can't forgive him, I'm not going to forgive him, I'd let go of the most precious

part of my identity if I forgive him.

The grievance, this grievance has kept me going for years, provided 50% of my mind activity and 30% of my verbal output. Grievance related to grief, related to grave, related to heaviness. Strange how words, words will tell you already, the heaviness of the grievance, the lifelessness, and the grief.

And when you're faced with a challenging situation, this happens sometimes in life, you face the situation fully as presence. And you're able then to look and out of that flow of, one could almost say current of awareness that flows, there's the situation, the current of awareness that flows into the situation is intelligence, it activates whatever it is that the situation requires. It activates it from within you as a response, action perhaps, words, action.

It also activates the totality of the energy field, the total energy field that is the world, that is intelligent. And so things happen suddenly that are helpful factors because the one, the greater intelligence is operating. Just the right thing happens.

Not that the external world can ever provide you with absolute limitless comfort and joy, that's not its purpose. That is only in the formless consciousness, not in the world of form. So it's in the nature of the world of form that it will, according to the mind, go wrong frequently.

It's not wrong at all. The mind calls it wrong because I expected something else. And some situations need action.

Others need simply to be totally accepted. But even situations that require action need to be accepted first as the is-ness of this moment. Can't argue with that.

And then, out of that acceptance, the energy of presence, whatever answer is required, comes. This is the same energy that in a very limited area great master sportsmen use when they do their sport, whatever they do. They are in a state of thoughtlessness.

What they call the zone. That's maybe a recent expression. They are in the zone.

The zone means in that state where they are at their best because they are not doing it. Power is moving through them. But only in their limited field of hitting that ball.

It's usually not in the rest of their life. You may become extremely good at hitting a ball. Big ball or small ball.

But I believe this is the reason why people become fascinated with watching certain games like tennis or whatever for hours in which after all not much is happening. It can go on for hours. And yet to see how they out of presence play can be a joy.

There's nobody there playing. They are at one with the game. Totally at one with the

process.

There's no separate entity. And it's a joy to see it. But one can live like that.

It's the same. We've all seen martial arts movies. And if they are good then you can see that the action arises suddenly out of alert stillness.

There's absolute alertness in which there's nobody there as a person. There's only the looking and the alertness. And action arises and immediately back into stillness.

They don't get taken. They just happen and back. A wave of action and it's gone.

The master martial arts master never gets angry. That would be an egoic reaction. It would be a diminishment.

It comes out of stillness. Out of no mind. No mind.

So that is our destiny is to live in that way. Not that we don't think anymore. Thought operates still.

It operates when it is needed for certain tasks. It also operates in a harmless way as clouds of thought drifting in and out of your field of awareness as you go about your life. With nice spaces in between.

And there comes a thought. Thought the fundamental thing that has changed there is no longer self in your thoughts. Self a me a sense of self.

The self goes out of thought. Whereas before thought was full of self. Every thought was my was you were so identified it became you.

And if somebody argued with some thought that you held you felt personally attacked somebody doubted your opinion said no that's not quite right what do you mean it's not right? You identified with a mental position. Thought had self in it.

And if thought has self in it it's a painful business. It's a painful trap. And thought becomes serious and problematic and creates a problematic life.

And there comes the seriousness of every thought that you hold has a heaviness to it because you're totally in it and you totally believe in it. They all believe in their little stories and interpretations even the collective ones. That's how we see it.

We are they are attacking us no we are defending ourselves they have all their own story we are the victims no they are both the victims they have their own story and they are totally identified with their interpretation. There is no other this is the truth. It's self it has a collective self in it or it has a personal self in it.

And it has a heaviness because there is the delusion of self in thought. And when

thought is free of self because your self has turned out to be a salt bubble that there was nothing much there and the true self is presence the power of presence the aliveness of presence the intelligence of presence the stillness of it is who you are but not whatever thought comes into your head or the emotion that goes with it those are temporary energy fields. So as you live in become rooted in presence thought loses its seriousness and its heaviness and so the thought that remains is either empowered which you might use to create this or that in the game of creation not to fulfill myself as to be really fully myself expecting through it to gain fame and recognition and wealth and blow myself up I mean they both

[Speaker 2] (3:34:09 - 3:34:12)

go together first you blow

[Speaker 1] (3:34:12 - 3:39:32)

yourself up and then it pops so thought can be very powerful for creation it always before something comes into material form there is a thought form but humans will not be allowed to fully utilize the power that is in thought or creating as long as they live in egoic illusion because what they would create would be hell out of ego if every ego could create it would be hell it's already half hell with a limited power of creation of thoughts thought loses its seriousness and it loses its capacity to make you unhappy because you are not totally in it anymore so little thoughts they are recognized as there goes a thought no more it doesn't get hold of you grasp you and you don't get hold of it and then thought is fine it's not a problem it's still there but it's not the basis of your life anymore of who you are no self as long as there is self in it there is suffering and I believe this is probably what the Buddha talked about 2600 years ago there is no self in anything that is the doctrine of anatta no self don't look for yourself in any form thought form or other form anatta no self because if you look for yourself in form that is suffering and so the question is people ask is there such a thing as reincarnation yes there is every day every time you identify with any form including a thought or an emotion and you are totally in it you have incarnated into a new form it's become a me and then comes the next you incarnate into that you identify with that a reaction you incarnate with the emotion that rises and what you say you are totally possessed by the thoughts another incarnation so the question is how many times each day do I reincarnate and so of course reincarnation is a fact and when does it end the end of reincarnation can only come at this moment when I don't identify with the form that arises I let it be the emotion the thought some external form and say this is mine don't you touch that it's bigger than yours even children have that already my dad is stronger than yours so they talk of the end of the need to reincarnate the cycle the continuous cycle of birth but that cycle ends of course if you live under the compulsion to reincarnate every day it's more than likely that the compulsion will continue this little entity that believes itself to be separate consciousness having entered the dream of form and that's fine from a larger

perspective needs to have more incarnations because it wasn't satisfied with the thousands of incarnations it had in this lifetime where is the next one I need another body

[Speaker 2] (3:39:33 - 3:39:34)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (3:39:39 - 3:41:05)

and the drive the wanting to perpetuate myself as a form is still there wanting to stand out as someone be someone exist again and which is the egos the egos need to stand out what about me me and even if an ego is timid and doesn't want to it's just the reversal of that hiding underneath that is the need to to stand out a timid ego that doesn't want to stand out simply it is afraid that it's will be criticized when it does stand out and it cannot it'll suffer defeat it's afraid of standing out but it wants to stand out every ego wants is that need to be someone special ultimately extraordinary special more than it's always part of that you can notice it even as giving an opinion some of these people are talking and what they're saying is obviously nonsense so now you begin to speak

[Speaker 2] (3:41:07 - 3:41:09)

let me tell you

[Speaker 1] (3:41:09 - 3:53:52)

how it really is with presence you become quite from the ego's point of view quite ordinary the need to be special goes oh that's a big relief if you don't need to be extraordinary anymore to make you special in order to feel that your life is fulfilled I'm extraordinary and then you discover your true extraordinariness is hidden in absolute ordinariness and you can see that in some humans who are connected deeply with being and perhaps create out of that perhaps a great master painter or composer or whatever they do and those in whom the ego hasn't come back and claimed it's me I did that that happens also others remained humble very humble and simple and this when you talk to them you say they don't need to prove anything they don't need to be anybody special they're just so ordinary if you had met Einstein you would have felt that he remained throughout his life totally ordinary and humble he couldn't even understand what people said of him he said the discrepancy between what people think of me and who I am is just ridiculous that's what he said so he never there was no claiming anything I so when you don't need to be great anymore and then you are great life is full of paradox present as you sit here in your body do that when you watch television television can draw your attention out of the body easily it can put you into a kind of hypnotic trance where you are no longer concerned you momentarily forget your own thoughts that's a little bit of a

relief and you switch into the collective thought movement of the TV screen but it frees you for a moment of your personal story so when you watch TV can you feel the body at the same time the inner can you feel the presence that you are and watch from there beautiful you feel so alive when you go about the world sensing the aliveness that you are in a conflict situation at work or at home a committee meeting or whatever discussion people arguing taking up mental positions be there it's doubly important that you can stay present within it's easy to be pulled out particularly if you are surrounded by several unconscious people by the way unconscious as you probably know means completely identified with thought it's ugly no matter how clever you are or how knowledgeable or intellectual you could still be totally unconscious and probably are if you are so much if you have so much investment in thinking this is a heaviness up here so unconscious humans can have a certain there's an energy field of unconsciousness that pulls you can have a pull they can either pull you to their same level and you start reacting and playing the game again or you stay present and if you stay present in an environment that is not present whether it's one other human being or more than one the change will come about sooner or later and probably sooner either the entire energy field of the interaction will change because there's one field of presence that can make others more present without wanting anything simply being there by looking and being alert brings in a different energy or it will change because either that person or those people will remove themselves from there because they don't like to be in the presence of presence they'd rather be unconscious or you find yourself removing yourself without any decision making process involved you may find yourself getting up and saying goodbye change will happen when you are present your job can you be present in your job in that environment you may ask can't be they're all unconscious around me you don't know that yet whether you can be present you have to live it and see but if you do live it be careful change will happen one way or another they may sack you they may sack you because you are not suffering from a stress related disease like all the others if you can't be doing your job you are not ill be present when you watch the madness on TV that is in the news it's no more than what's been happening for thousands of years the same madness except that it's magnified through technology and a good thing is that everybody can see it on the street that's one good thing that comes out of TV there may be one or two others that everybody can see what's happening it's hard to doubt the madness of it when you see it right in front of you the first time that happened in the history of humanity was Vietnam early 60s mid 60s when for the first time war was in everybody's living room and everybody saw the madness of it and that was also a time of spiritual awakening both in America and in Europe when suddenly a huge influx of Eastern teachings came to the West because the West suddenly became receptive why did they become receptive? an entire country United States millions of people for the first time disidentified from the collective consciousness that before even in the 50s everybody was still totally identified except for a few rare individuals and suddenly they saw we are mad too it's not that we are right and they are wrong always the madness is in us too they disidentified from the collective forms the collective ego they stepped out

and a huge alternative movement developed you can't even separate the increasing madness and the awakening and that's the strange thing that's happening even now they go together the old consciousness plays itself out and becomes more and more visible on the surface you can see it so clearly and part of the awakening both on an individual and collective level is to recognize madness as madness that's already part of the awakening when you see we are mad that is mad and so that's the intensification of the egoic consciousness and the coming in of the new they work hand in hand they go together so the world becomes more dysfunctional more mad and at the same time consciousness is transforming in humans before that reaches the outer levels of the world which are corporate structures and entities and the humans that run that and the outer most which is political entities and the humans that run that there is a certain delay before even it reaches the media or it reaches the media here and there already for the most part what you still see in the media is the old consciousness the manifestation of that and it's getting worse on that level and that's how it is and at the same time the awakening happens it will be a while before that reaches the screens on a large scale but already you can see little signs here and there it does happen I had said for many times in talks this talk is not going to be on the news tonight and I had been right for a long time and suddenly somebody came and they wanted to film part of a talk and put it on the national news in Canada and they did I was wrong I was very happy I was wrong it wasn't it was only 3 minutes and yet it was there that was a miracle in itself because this is not something you would normally see on the news because we are not smashing anything up we are not we are not blowing ourselves up or throwing bombs and yet it was on the news

[Speaker 2] (3:53:52 - 3:53:53)

so

[Speaker 1] (3:53:57 - 4:14:13)

in bed tonight go into your inner energy field be there as an alive presence not a thinking little being thinking about the end of the retreat what you are going to do be there less and less don't activate so much the concern with your life situation whenever when you truly need to think about it and take action then you will be present with that but don't revive whatever personal life situation you have and everybody has one don't continuously revive that in your mind because that will absorb everything your life situation which is thought forms past and future my story absorbs most people's entire life they are continuously lost in their life situation they miss life it is now so make life the focal point of your life and life situation is on the periphery you deal with it when it comes not revive and think oh I have so many problems you do show it to me where is it where is the problem well here my bank account whatever is zero all I can see is a figure on a piece of paper just a cipher I lived for many years not knowing where the next day or the next week income would come from and it always came from somewhere it wasn't

a problem I didn't feel poor in the eyes of the world I was poor probably lived below the poverty line for several years and then it improved somewhat but still was just a minimum and that was fine even for two years when I didn't have a home or a job or an income life looked after me because I trusted in life which is the present moment don't let your life situation absorb your attention completely especially when you are in bed at night go into sleep from the beauty the power that is you inhabit the body as you lie there in bed it's best if you do it lying on your back and feel the intense aliveness that is in every cell the presence that you are and sleep go into sleep from there and if you wake up in the middle of the night and the movement of thought wants to start immediately notice it and say okay I'll go into the body and you within an instant you can change what would have been a sleepless restless night with agonizing thoughts useless thoughts because there is nothing you can do right there and you are not threatened you are just in a state of fear because you have fearful concepts in your head you are in bed you are not being threatened by anything but the concepts in your head are threatening you what's going to happen what could happen what do I do if that happens what do I do if I lose that I don't get that and all those concepts that you then identify with are very threatening they are like little animals in your head and you take them to be real you go oh no it's unreal it's like phantoms that the mind creates fear thoughts and always to test the reality of the situation what is the reality here and now what is the problem here and now none or if it is if it has reality then there is something you can do about it or you can surrender to it well the problem is I am in prison ok break out apply for parole or surrender to what is and if you are planning to break out or planning to apply for parole you still have to surrender first otherwise you will be unhappy there may be certain illnesses some people have advanced illnesses and whether healing or not is possible you don't know but it is more likely in the state of non-resistance books have been written about it even medical research has shown that in those cases where spontaneous healing happened it did not happen when people were making the illness into an enemy it happened through acceptance deep acceptance with which comes peace and it is only the peace that is the healer the inner peace is the healer I remember a story about Byron Katie a spiritual teacher in the States she was visiting a woman suffering from advanced cancer throughout her body maybe only a few more weeks to live and she can be quite radical in the way she expresses herself this teacher but straight cutting through mind so she visited the woman and the woman looked of course extremely unhappy and suffering and Byron Katie said to her I don't see a problem and the woman the woman got angry and she took off the cover of her bed and she showed her her right leg was three or four times the size of her left leg it had already swollen to a gigantic because of the disease and she said you want to see a problem I'll show you a problem said the patient and she said look at this and Byron Katie said oh I see your problem is that you think your right leg should be exactly the same size as your left leg and at that moment for the first time in a long time the patient laughed because at that moment the patient disidentified from thought structures thought structures that were saying this should not be this should be otherwise and what was ultimately causing the

suffering there may have been physical pain but suffering was caused by the thought structures in her head that could not accept what is that argued with it and said no so the suffering always comes out of thought suffering is thought made pain is possible physical pain yes but the two are of course they are related suffering can end before physical pain ends suffering can end a few days before you die of some disease you can come to the end of suffering and you will have fulfilled the purpose of your life on earth the flowering has happened the liberation has happened you stepped out of identification with mind the flowering of consciousness has happened for the flowering of consciousness to happen you don't need a lot more time you don't need any time really and if it should be so for you that you are not sure whether you are going to live a few more months which by the way nobody knows in this room whether they are going to live because forms are unstable we just don't know but if the likelihood in you seems to be greater for some reason that you may not survive for more than a few months allow that to one could almost say force you into presence because life has taken time away from you life has taken future away from you which to the ego is the most dreadful thing that could happen to anybody but is in fact the most wonderful thing that could happen to anybody that future is taken away the mind cannot seek refuge anymore in future so you are forced you are either in intense suffering or you are forced into intense presence and I know some people to whom this has happened one passed away two years ago I know another friend of mine to whom who is in that situation now and the friend who passed away two or two and a half years ago became radiant in the last few weeks months of her life as the body wasted away she simply could almost see light coming through her and peace and her eyes were clear became totally clear what greater thing could happen to a human being than that so if that happens of course to everyone here in this room it will come sooner or later the impending end of this form and even if you are only 25 now there is no guarantee that you will go on to 95 or 100 you may you may not so don't wait for life to take future away from you although when it happens it's good relinquish future as a psychological thing not on a practical level on a practical level you say okay tomorrow I'll catch a train tomorrow we'll meet here at 9.30 again practical level no problem practical future no problem psychological future is the problem and on that level you relinquish future needing to become someone and so on a practical level you can do all kinds of new things explore new things learn new things create things play around with creation create this or that but foundation for creation is the inner state of alignment with life then what you create is more empowered and will be for the good and not create more suffering because what you create out of the egoic state creates more suffering karmic so you could build a gigantic corporation out of feeling inadequate I'll show them who I am and it has happened people have built gigantic enterprises and become multi billionaires and then collapsed of stress and before they collapsed they looked and said what was all that about and in the meantime the thousands of employees also were ill with stress and unhappy so what you create out of the state of alignment will be different from what you create out of ego and it will be more empowered and it will be different because it will be in alignment with consciousness

where the whole cosmos is going and what it is we don't know it depends on you some may not create anything you may just be happy sitting there and talking to whoever comes to you or you may continue to do your job but it becomes just just a cover for consciousness you could do the most the simplest job like handing out tickets in a cinema and every person you look at you look at through presence here you are enjoy the film here you are and you're in continuous meditation and maybe you'll stay there and change many people's lives you contribute to something new a seed can come even there to anybody who has some readiness even a minimum degree of readiness that moment can be a trigger and it will be for some they will never know it perhaps that moment was the trigger for an inner change or it may be that you do that for a while and then life takes you somewhere else and suddenly you have a group in front of you and say well here we are which is always a good way to start on a purely practical level I hesitate to use the word tomorrow and as you know tomorrow never comes except as the now we may have questions if there are any unless something else happens you never know we may have silence for a large part of the day unless something else happens we don't know that yet in the meantime it's our job to deepen presence just just this to accept what is to be friendly with what is and if on the surface of things what is doesn't look so great you can use a little mantra that a friend of mine came up with when something happens that so it goes wrong this to to T-O-O this also meaning it is my job to say yes to also to this this to if it looks as if something that you cannot accept this to it's always wonderful when little things go wrong during the day they always do one way or another it's beautiful because then every time you can find a space you know there it is again oh there it is again and you smile when it happens sometimes you get a sequence of four or five things not working as they should and there was a buzzing sound on the recording tape the recording today oh here we go Kim surrendered oh that's how it is space and then the next thing and the next you have a spacious relationship to things that happen then spacious compassionate even towards things that happen or don't happen as they should happen compassionate towards life

[Speaker 2] (4:19:04 - 4:19:41)

we celebrate we are the new man sunrise over the mountain spreading your light over the land

[Speaker 1] (4:20:32 - 5:09:09)

so since yesterday morning and before you've been chopping wood and carrying water one way or another being total with whatever you are doing at any moment or rather in the expressed also in another Zen saying that a master once answered when his disciple said they talked to him of another master who could walk on water and he said he can walk on water what can you do and he gave the famous reply when I'm hungry I eat when I'm tired I sleep doesn't everybody do that what he means is he does nothing else at that moment he has no stuff around eating when he eats and no stuff around sleeping

when he goes to bed no resistance no demands this moment is just as it is there's no self that moves into the action whatever he's doing no expectation this moment is enough not expectation always implies you're hoping that some future moment will be fuller through this moment through doing something at this moment but if you haven't found the fullness of this moment you can't find the fullness no matter what the next moment contains because the next moment is this moment always when it comes so carrying the burden of self into what you do greatly reduces your sense of aliveness greatly reduces your intelligence intelligence not IQ intelligence true deeper intelligence and makes life heavy because yourself the sense of me with its unfulfilled expectations of this or that or its complaints about what's not happening now or whatever it may be that's the heaviness that then flows into what you do because every self is heavy there's then no lightness you could even have stuff around sitting here this moment not totally wanting to be here complaining about this or that carrying some memory from the past into here or a very common thing would rather be somewhere else so you're not total not truly fully here because there's self the burden of self which is mind stuff it's a self a conceptual self and it's in its very nature that it cannot be fulfilled in the present moment it looks always to the next moment its state is unfulfillment and that's not personal and the strange thing is the sense of being unfulfilled makes up a large part of what people conceive of as themselves their personal sense of self all it is it's a mind pattern collective human mind pattern and it's mistaken for me my dilemma my sense of not enough and perhaps it was the Buddha 2600 years ago who was the first human I don't know who realized the illusion of self who realized the truth of no self in any form any thought any emotion any external form or internal form he realized the truth of anatta there's no self in it and if you're looking for self there's dukkha suffering so there's only suffering if you're looking for self in thought or self in an emotion if thought is in doubt with a sense of self and every emotion is in doubt with a sense of self is not recognized as just a human emotion passing through thoughts passing through or external situations where I'm looking for myself through something or other through some external possession through fame through recognition whatever it may be through my father or my mother understanding me so you cannot find yourself anywhere and all the Buddhists have this strange expression no self as the essence sometimes even called and it's frightening to the ego emptiness all it means is stillness a still mind or rather no mind emptiness and yet what is there when the mind is still there's something there but you cannot define it because it has no form something not even a thing any word you use is wrong because every word derives from the world of things remember to be here in touch with your inner energy field otherwise you'll become restless and start thinking when you become restless you've moved you've lost touch with a deeper sense of being and moved into the head and then unconscious body movements can sometimes happen emotions are also a restless thing but you're not usually conscious of it I can sometimes tell when people are not fully here their legs or feet start shaking their eyes go drifting they're looking for somewhere else some other place they've moved into the head in the meantime the legs go and it's quite normal many people spend a lot of

time sitting like that if an animal did it we would have to take it to the vet because imagine your dog doing that then it would be obvious there's something wrong with the dog but with humans it's normal and when you notice it then something another dimension has come in there's an awareness suddenly that your leg is shaking the restlessness and suddenly you notice it you notice certain involuntary movements or whatever it is and that's very significant the noticing because awareness is there presence is there it's only then you can see what's going on inside you when there's no presence you don't know what's going on inside you because you're so identified with what's going on you are what is going on you don't know what's going on you have to you're acting it out you're an actor who has forgotten that he or she is acting out a script you're totally in it and it's all conditioned and then people's behavior becomes predictable you can tell from people relatives and so on that you've known for a long time that most of people's behavior is predictable you can even predict what they're going to answer when you say something what their reaction is going to be predictable reaction but whatever you can observe in yourself means you're conscious enough to observe something in yourself and that's all that's needed you don't really need to change anything as such because then you have another dilemma and that dilemma is part of many people's sense of self and that is there's something wrong with me and many people have that there's something wrong with me and I need to there's something I need to repair whatever it is now you could either say there are two statements we can make here and just two different perspectives on it and they're both right in their own way there's nothing wrong with you and there's something wrong with everybody as long as there's no presence of course there's dysfunction but the moment you notice that there's nothing wrong awareness is all that's needed presence is all that's needed for example when you become conscious of your legs shaking soon after it'll stop shaking because it will only shaking because you are unconscious of it it would be rare for a human to consciously shake their legs and say okay I'll just carry on shaking this leg they don't do it oh and then after a while it dies down because your attention was there it's flown into there and you see that and then it slows down and goes another one is to notice that you are unfriendly towards the present moment and that's does that mean there's something wrong with you?

no, it's something supremely right with you because you you are conscious you are aware that you are unfriendly with the present moment that's all that's needed if there's something wrong with you truly wrong you don't even know it so those humans with whom there is something wrong they have no idea they think there's absolutely nothing wrong those who are the most extreme manifestations of human unconsciousness those human beings who go around with bombs or machine guns or throw whatever they throw they don't think there's anything wrong with them nothing wrong with me there's everything wrong with them there so when you notice something hostility towards the present moment in whatever form there's nothing wrong the presence is there the very purpose of your life on earth is fulfilling itself at that moment the arising of

consciousness so what could possibly be wrong?

and yet the egoic identity the egoic self insists in many cases there is something wrong with me and it can sometimes obscure the awareness when you observe something in yourself such as hostility towards what is the present moment at that moment the mind can come in again and obscure the awareness that was there for a moment and formulate some kind of judgment it is a new thought and that judgment for example would say you see you're not good enough you can't do it you've been to the retreat plus 50 workshops before that and you see you still can't do it there is something wrong with you you see you're no good look, they're all present you're the only one who can't do it you might as well give up so when you observe something in yourself the mind may then come in obscure the presence that was there for a moment and make a thought out of it that has to do something with yourself to add something to your sense of self and so the heaviness of self can increase even there because when you become aware you become aware you come of so many ways in which you create heaviness in your life in which you resist the present moment in which you add stuff to the chopping of the wood and the carrying of the water and a mental commentary while you carry the water oh this is this is awful how much how much longer it feels much heavier than yesterday why do I have to do this why don't they carry the water they should be stuff around all kinds of mind stuff am I getting weaker all kinds of whatever it is I shouldn't be carrying water I've been doing it for ten years it's other people's turn now nobody nobody acknowledges me that I'm carrying this water they don't even thank me hard work carrying that water is hard work but eighty percent of the energy that is expanded on carrying the water is actually mind stuff the heaviness that the mind produces otherwise it would just be that it might be a heavy bucket but it's not really it's just easy so it's wonderful to realize there's nothing wrong with you and the more things you discover in yourself that had been unconscious the more you are fulfilling your destiny on the planet which is you become a manifestation of consciousness arising you go beyond the merely personal the delusion of a form identification the heavy thing for many people is the pain body which is the reason why many people think there's something very wrong with them because periodically they suffer an influx of heavy emotion painful emotion negative emotion fear deep sadness or very dark mood anger all kinds of forms of upset and even those who in whom consciousness is already arising presence is already arising they still find themselves in many cases at the mercy of the temporary the periodic arising of their pain body which is past pain remnants of past pain that are still alive and have accumulated inside you as a little entity personal plus collective part of it is collective pain body it could be the collective pain body of your family that's part of your personal pain body or the collective pain body of the part of the world you live in could be some are heavier than others and certainly it will be also partly the suffering of humanity the collective pain body of humanity and everybody has his or her share of that and that is a little energy form in you and that's obviously that's what it is because everything every form is an energy form every thought is an energy form the table is an energy form it

just looks solid it isn't there was an amazing realization from physics it's 99% empty space but it looks solid same as the body 99.999% empty space so the pain body is energy an energy form one could say almost like a little entity made up of emotion an emotional entity I saw in a film recently a character that got closest to what the human pain body looks like and it's in the film Lord of the Rings a little being I can't remember the name Gollum but yet sometimes if you look it's very well done sometimes when you look into his eyes you see there's a being hiding in there even there there's a sweet being hiding in there somewhere and just the same the pain body is energy life energy trapped that's all created by the ego by thousands of years of living through an illusory sense of self and creating a reality on the basis of that illusion living in a world of enemies because that's the ego's world creating enemies wherever you go not being able to live without them making the whole world appear hostile towards you having to fear every little thing of course that creates a lot of pain and even though presence may be arising in you and in all of you it is you may still find yourself being taken over by that thing when it wakes up from its dormant stage might be dormant for a week or two or three or four and then at some point it wants to experience more pain it wakes up and then it tries to find out what's going on in your life right now it looks for an opening where it can go in into your mind and so that could be a slight upset with something while you are driving traffic a driver cuts across and there is a slight oh and at that moment the pain body uses that as an opening and flows into that little upset and then before you know it the little upset has developed into a stream of negative thinking about the world and in general and yourself and other people and the stupidity of them all and before you know it the little thing has grown into something a huge field of heavy negative energy oh that's the pain body it used that little it was waiting for it and of course pain bodies help each other so the driver who cut across you was probably possessed by his pain I'm going to show him the phenomenon that's called road rage where two drivers stop their cars and start attacking each other physically means when two active pain bodies happen to meet on the road that can happen not only two active pain bodies but two active pain bodies in two humans in whom not the slightest trace of presence has yet arisen they are totally identified with that and they can't help it they're driven to it so the pain body becomes part of the self it amplifies the already heavy and dysfunctional self even without the influx of the heavy past emotion that is in the pain body so even in at the best of times there is a heaviness to the self to that sense of self of me but that becomes amplified through the old emotion of the pain body it uses the structures the mind structures of the egoic self and flows into them and then they become it's like putting higher voltage into the into the heaviness of the ego and the dysfunction of it you plug it into and so there they have all the egoic structures plus an enormous amount of emotion raw needing desperately to experience some more drama or pain wanting more pain and one way of looking at that is that is in human beings the addiction to emotional pain that's the pain body and if you ever discover that in yourself that at that moment you're loving it indulging in negative thinking for example which is one way in which the pain body renews itself feeding on your thinking your thought

every thought feeds it and the emotion fuels the negative thinking the thinking feeds the emotion the emotion fuels the thinking the thinking feeds the emotion vicious circle can go on and it's great don't want to get up then at that moment you don't want to get out of your pain so if the pain body may be feeding on your thinking may be feeding on other people's reactions and at that moment you don't want anything else you want that because you are the pain body at that moment there is an addiction to emotional pain so if you get drawn into a stream of negative thinking about life about other people about yourself about whatever it may be or one person which could be yourself or your partner or your father or some politician not mentioning any names and whenever you the image of that person comes into your head there is an enormous influx of pain so but again we could easily misinterpret the pain body as being personal and as unconsciousness being the personal shortcoming of someone but all that if it's a politician or your partner or whatever but all that is there is the expression of human unconsciousness and the pain body wonderfully expressed in the words of Jesus they know not what they do forgive them for they know not what they do or in the modern translation it hasn't been published yet they are completely unconscious and when that is the case they create suffering and when you react as if there were a person there who knows what he is doing you also become unconscious the reaction can make you unconscious the reaction can take you over and then your own pain body suddenly is there so and the pain body contributes to the fact that many people believe there is something wrong with them and there isn't it's the human pain body and the heavier it is in you because people have varying degrees of density in their pain body the more likely it is that it will drive you into consciousness because the pain gets too much I can't live like that anymore and then suddenly you notice it when it arises the first sign of it you may be able to catch a little event triggering an enormous reaction so what's that and you notice that emotional movement inside you your present what then happens we don't know the pain body may still arise depending on your degree of presence strange thing happens when the pain body comes up it uses an opportunity we mentioned the car could be your partner who makes a remark or comment that the pain body can use as an opportunity to arise what did you mean when you said that were you accusing me why are you accusing me I wasn't accusing you yes you were accusing and to observe it then as it arises whether you can do that depends on your degree of presence and it's quite possible that you can detect it for most people it works like this they become conscious just after it's happened a pain body episode has happened a pain body came up a drama developed perhaps with your partner or at work or some other member of your family or even with a stranger drama developed there was perhaps a lot of shouting and fighting and then pain body fed itself on the emotional pain and then subsided and went back to its dormant state and then consciousness some consciousness comes back what was that what was all that about sometimes partners can do it after the drama they can both say what was all that about and then you think how did it start we can't even remember what the whole thing was about in some cases they can't even remember how it all started it was about nothing in many cases much ado about nothing Shakespeare's play

and then they become conscious there was our pain body or there was my pain body that was it ok well let's see if next time we can catch it a little bit sooner and then usually it arises in one person before it triggers the reaction in the other so it can sometimes happen that one partner remains conscious and observes the arising of the pain body in the other and then perhaps can either point it out or if that's too dangerous can can simply be intensely present in the body and simply be there as an aware presence a non-reacting presence but that is requires great intensity of presence because the pain body is clever very clever it knows the weak points where you're most likely to react or if you think it's all too much for you you can quietly walk out of the room but who knows what happens after that of course as you know it's easier to see it in others than in yourself and if you're genuinely present and say there's your pain body it's starting the other person may become at that moment and say yeah, you're right or the pain body may already have taken possession of their thoughts and so the person can no longer see it and the pain body then will never admit that he or she is the pain body of course if you ask are you the pain body they would not admit to it but they would probably tell you that you are the pain body or throw something at you or deny the whole thing all that nonsense about pain body so pain body is a great challenge it is not personal it does not mean there's something wrong with you usually as presence arises the gap between the ending of the pain body episode and the arising of conscious presence when you recognize what has happened gets shorter and shorter at first you might need an hour or two after an episode or even a day and then you look back at what happened yesterday oh, that was and then that shortens and then you may be able to be present either when it's not yet either has not fully arisen yet in its very early stages of an emotional reaction trying to move into your mind and you may be able to catch it there and watch it or you may be able to catch it as it begins to subside the episode is coming to an end and gradually you're getting tired of the drama it's exhausting of course and in that moment the pain body is still partly there you catch it and say oh, I can still feel it it often happens very frequently that the it also happens very frequently that the pain body when it needs to feed on more pain comes up and you are there very present very alert and you see it so it meets presence the light of presence and usually it may stick around for a little while to see if it can get through there somewhere presence by the way is not holding it down presence never exerts any effort on anything it never resists anything presence never holds the pain body down in any way that is a dangerous thing one could do that through will power I have no negative emotion because I'm spiritually advanced I'm just not seeing them I'm just not they don't exist and of course then they'll come out in very strange ways so you cannot hold the pain body down you can for a short while and then it'll come up in strangest ways and you do the weirdest things including physical violence or you inflict cruelty on people and don't even know it or you make your body very ill the pain body is no other outlet it can become very destructive an unexpressed emotion churning around you for years so presence never pushes it down it's simply a light into which it comes that's all the light of presence the light of awareness the light of consciousness the pain body

comes into the light and the strange thing is it doesn't like the light so it will either try to obscure the light so that it can continue to pretend to be you it can take you over and become you for a while and live through you the emotion wants to live again through you another form of reincarnation the emotion wants to live again through you it wants to relive what it already knows what it makes up its energy field and so it cannot do that when there's presence when you are there you are actually there as the consciousness that watches then it can't do it so it may for a while it will try you can see it comes up the little entity and there's a light shining on it and then it may try again coming up and you're still you watch it and then it tends to shrink back into a little dark corner it waits for a better opportunity it's a and that's it's fine that's how the whole this is how consciousness works it doesn't mean you're now totally free of pain but it does at that moment it's gone down it's you're too conscious can't come in the evening perhaps it'll find a better opportunity when you lose consciousness through watching a certain politician on TV or your partner comes home late from work where have you been?

some upset happens one drink too many and there's his chance or her chance in certain it's more in males there are quite a few I don't know the percentage of the population it is frequently happens that in certain males the pain body comes up particularly when they drink too much and so they lose the their level of consciousness that they normally have which may not be that high even at the best of times but when they get drunk it goes down considerably and so often violence is associated with being drunk for from in this perhaps 10% of men they become physically violent when when they become unconscious through alcohol and they do dreadful things and then when they are sober again how could I have done such a thing I don't know what came over me and some have that cycle in in their with their partner physically abusive and so of course when they are little bit more conscious they always promise this is the last time it won't happen again now that's not the pain body speaking that's them speaking when there's a little bit more consciousness and of course it will happen again unless presence truly comes into their lives so in some cases you may have to physically remove yourself from a destructive pain body if change otherwise is not happening or would take too long you would not survive two more years with that person perhaps in that case you cannot stay around it would be too dangerous that person will then go its own his or her own way and evolve in their own time so pain body meets presence shrinks back then waits for a better opportunity but as presence arises there's even the possibility that you could detect an active pain body in you even in the midst of it even in the midst of it it is possible to wake up and suddenly realize what's happening you are acting out old emotional pain and at that moment there happens a dissociation between that entire emotional field and yourself it's like stepping out of a of a role out of an energy field you were in it and suddenly you step out of that phantom self you step out and there you see it it's still there active still in you still doing what it does maybe still you're waving your arms about or whatever it is at that moment there may still be words coming out of your mouth

[Speaker 2] (5:09:10 - 5:09:11)

you, you

[Speaker 1] (5:09:21 - 5:40:08)

and at that moment you see it wow and then it cannot last for long very much longer at least not right there it doesn't mean it's gone forever but then it will quickly shrink again back because it cannot consciousness and pain body cannot coexist for long and every time you bring presence to it the pain body cannot renew itself so it can only play out its old energy when you the more you can be present with it the less can it use you to renew itself and so it what happens then to the pain body the energy becomes freed that was trapped in there and many people have carried so much pain that they can't do much else in their lives they haven't that absorbs so much of their aliveness that they have little left to live their life the emotional pain and this is in the case of dense pain bodies the emotional pain is so much that it consumes them it's like a parasite it consumes them all their aliveness and as you bring consciousness to it that trapped energy becomes freed it was trapped at a low frequency if you could hear it something like that you wouldn't want to listen to a radio station for too long like that and so that becomes freed but it is with life energy it is aliveness ultimately and there is an increasing sense of aliveness that you feel because the energy leaves it's trapped in the pain body very much you could compare to I sometimes compare to a piece of heavy wood that's been burned so or coal the coal is transmuted into fire the flame of consciousness first it was it was a heavy substance dark and heavy substance and suddenly the dark and heavy substance burns and becomes a flame it becomes a transmutation into pure energy beautiful so that's and that is the beauty of it why ultimately whatever is is just fine as it is or even the human pain body has a function and that is that it provides fuel for consciousness the pain it makes ultimately it becomes your spiritual teacher one of your spiritual teachers and for some people their main spiritual teacher I would say for me it was my main spiritual teacher because I couldn't live with him any longer so I couldn't live with myself any longer and a large part of myself when that realization came to me as a thought I cannot live with myself any longer a large part of who I felt myself to be consisted of emotional pain and that just became unbearable and that's why I'm here now so the the mechanism there of ultimately what is ego induced pain pain induced through unconscious living through ego pain body egoic living creates pain suffering it even needs the continuation of pain because the ego and the pain body they both need conflict they both need further pain the ego needs it to define itself through the other the enemy the not me it needs the boundary around itself it needs to create opposition in order to feel itself it needs somebody to disagree with me for example so that I can feel that I'm right he's wrong and in being right the illusion of who I am grows a little bit I need that if everybody agrees with me in everybody I would begin to lose my artificial sense of self my mind made sense of self so religions often the collective identity that is in certain religions

largely consists of the unbelievers those who are not us give us our identity we define ourselves through those unbelievers they give us our sense of who we are now if suddenly they all became believers we would be at a loss who are we now they are all in possession of the truth now so we lose our identity as the possessors of the truth if everybody is in possession of the truth who are we if we are at peace with everybody we don't have enemies who are we if we don't define ourselves through our enemies not only collectively also personally people define themselves through their problematic life situation all the problems in their life situation make up my life me and my life so that artificial artificially induced sense of self disappears pain body pain is not who you are it's simply an energy that lives in you for a while and then becomes transmuted become friendly with your pain body may not yet be thankful for it I'm thankful now but at that time I wasn't thankful become friendly with your pain body this is the most powerful transformative tool so to speak because very often what manifests in the present moment is the pain body in you so if you are not making the now into an enemy if you become friendly with the now that will mean at times you have to become friendly with the pain body because you are experiencing that emotion now it's part of what is now and that is becoming friendly with it simply accept that it's there there it is I can feel it that implies of course that you know it's there which in turn implies of course that there's enough presence for you to see it you cannot become friendly with the pain body if you don't see it and the pain body's nature is not being friendly in itself so when you are the pain body you cannot become friendly with the present moment that's not what the pain body does so you see how it connects it's based on presence if there's presence in you then you can accept it then you can be friendly with it if there's not enough presence you can't be friendly with the pain body because then you are the pain body and the pain body is not friendly but once you are able to detect it and that's all that's required to know it's there then you can bring acceptance to it and say there you are there it is whatever or simply just watch feel it wow feel the raw emotion of it feel even the need to wanting somebody else to draw in wanting someone else to draw in and make him or her part of that emotion feel what it feels like directly what does it feel like in you as an energy field amazing so you are watching it that's all that's all that's needed so you cannot really watch it internally if you don't fully accept it and you cannot fully accept it if you are not there as the witness as the watcher of it and that's all that's needed so pain body nothing wrong with you human humanity in it's present evolutionary stage you can't escape that the present evolutionary stage of humanity has pain body nothing personal not a problem not your personal dilemma and by the way there's nothing personal in presence either the whole idea of person ultimately goes out of the window as you probably know the word person comes from latin is based on the mask that actors used to wear in the early forms of theater persona the mask the image of me so presence isn't personal either and yet it's I am it's the essence of being of your being you and being are one the essence of what obscurely shines through the egoic story of me you feel there's a somewhere in there there is an I am in there somewhere but the I am gets mixed up with thought forms and memories and patterns in the mind it gets mixed

up with a story there is something precious in the story but it's not the story it's the consciousness in the story even in a dream people say a dream is totally is unreal yes it's unreal but if there were not something real in there the dream couldn't even be for a dream to exist there must be something there that enables the dream the forms that make up the dream to exist what is it that enables the dream to exist consciousness it appears in consciousness what is it that enables the dream the story of me to exist what is the essence of who I am somewhere hidden in that story I'm looking for myself in the different forms of the story and yet each form of the story concealed as the essence of that form is I am a sense of presence of beingness that's I'm hiding everywhere but hiding so well disguised that I can't even recognize myself so it's a walking around in everyone is God in heavy disguise so you can say I am God in disguise and the other person says oh I hardly recognized you or you could say you certainly did fool me and I fooled myself for a long time so everybody feels there's something precious to have and that is true but it's not really in the forms of my story or in the form of anything but hidden in the form the essence of each form of each thought that I have of each emotion that I have the essence that enables it to be is always the same is always the one is the divine one self so that solves the dilemma the philosophical dilemma of whether the world is unreal or not so if anybody was planning to ask that question this afternoon you can drop it the world is obviously as real as a dream that you have it has a certain reality yes and yet just like a dream the forms that make up the world change continuously they don't stay around for that long this continuous flux things come and go very quickly every experience everything is fleeting it's like a dream and then it's gone you see some people even don't know was occasionally they'd say did I dream that or did that happen because it's gone it's a it was a fleeting experience and it's dissolved as that experience what was that all about always one the Chinese emperor who woke up from a dream and became very worried because he dreamt that he was a butterfly and then he suddenly thought maybe I'm a butterfly dreaming that I'm an emperor and it comes to the same thing the story of yourself is being dreamt by consciousness you could say how could it be otherwise and why is it happening because consciousness wants to dream that dream it's enjoying it on some level but consciousness also wants to wake up no otherwise we wouldn't be here this is not to provide the ultimate philosophical explanation of the universe because it would be impossible to do that through words or through thoughts but it's a slight hint of what it's all about it can only give a distant approximation of what it's all about never try to figure out through the mind what it's all about that's very heavy there's a knowing that comes when the need to figure out the universe is relinquished and you are happy with being alert and still and not knowing the answer if you become comfortable with not knowing then there is enormous wisdom and knowing in there how much of that you could ever put into words who knows maybe not very much how much of that will ever find expression who knows maybe only a tiny fraction and that's okay so it's knowing finding who you are not as a character in the story of me not as a character in the dream but as the dreamer you're not a character in your own story but that's what the ego believes you are of course the protagonist the main character the one character

that really matters all the others have supporting roles in the story of the ego supporting cast and then and then the rest of humanity and then the protagonist me and the me consists of a bundle of thought forms memories and then it dissolves sometimes it dissolves before the body dies when it becomes too painful to continue to be me sometimes it dissolves when a very serious illness comes or a very serious disability comes and the image of me cannot hold itself up anymore and then you realize you are not the character you are the dreamer of the character creator of the character the consciousness behind it all I've made it all up and it was never deadly serious it's only deadly serious it may be relatively serious but it's not deadly serious because it's only deadly serious if the forms that consciousness takes in the dream are all you know then every form is heavy and deadly and death is always around the corner and it's frightening but knowing yourself as the consciousness that changes the nature of the dream also it doesn't mean that the dream will immediately evaporate the dream actually becomes a more pleasant dream when you know when you are not totally lost in it you can continue to move in this world of form even your personal life continues the story of me of course continues you carry on doing certain things you've been doing that continues and yet there is a deeper dimension present now you no longer totally believe in the absolute reality of these forms you know they all come and go quickly you're not looking for yourself in the dream anymore that's the relief so you let the dream unfold it's fine but you're not looking for a stronger me or a more complete me as that character in the dream that's the dream can't really do that for you and so it may well be and here we come to another cosmological viewpoint only a tentative not to be taken as some absolute statement the universe ancient teachings and more modern findings both point to the possibility that the universe may be expanding like a heartbeat they say there was a big bang maybe maybe not maybe it's happening every moment and the universe came out of one point of nothingness nobody can actually explain that and suddenly manifestation happened and then it expanded and diversified and we may be still part of that and then at some point things come together again multiplicity rising out of oneness and yet the beauty is the oneness is never lost the point that was there before the universe ever came into being is still present in every being the timeless moment the timeless fullness of life unmanifested life that never really disappeared at some point the journey home begins for the entire universe back to oneness the journey home and what else is this gathering and the journey home so this may reflect something on a very small scale but it's all connected that's happening on a very large scale the beginning of the journey home to oneness because you discover the underlying essence and oneness of all life of yourself and we couldn't do that if that were not part of a larger movement within the cosmos and we are simply an expression of that awakening out of the dream of multiplicity perhaps the dream had to be dreamt so that God can know him her itself as God only after losing itself in form and then waking up and it's so beautiful that waking up that is built into the dream the need to wake up and that's why the dream is meant to become unpleasant after a while because the unpleasantness of the dream, the dream turning unpleasant is the built-in alarm clock in

the dream preordained built-in alarm clock that's the unpleasantness and after that has rang another character appears in a dream called the spiritual teacher and the spiritual teacher says as the character in the dream don't you realize this is the dream and that you can wake up even while you're still dreaming this dream you can wake up and know who you are even in the dream and continue to play that character without totally believing in it anymore without losing yourself in the character this temporary form and then you see how much more pleasant the dream is and that may also you may know that all the very ancient myths in so many cultures have the story of the golden age the very distant beginning of things when there was when beings lived in harmony in total harmony India has that story of the yugas the original beginning of things was when things perhaps were still closer to oneness and the more you get away from the oneness into diversification the more difficult things become the harder it gets because every form believes itself to be separate and then there's the promised return the return to the state of oneness so things start with the golden age so called and then they deteriorate continuously but in the process of deterioration there's also a lot of learning of forms we learn what all the things that make up the universe and then comes the return and as you go back to the source back to back home things the dream improves again but this time with consciousness with knowing so we paradise regained as one ancient literary work is entitled paradise regained and that is the purpose paradise regained is not quite the same as the original paradise it's conscious the original was natural natural oneness and then conscious oneness so this gathering here is part of a huge thing it's not an isolated phenomenon it's not even relegated to just this planet it must be connected with everything else in the cosmos otherwise it wouldn't be able to exist here as a gathering we wouldn't be sitting here talking about this and realizing this if you can become still whatever you truly need to know you'll know out of that stillness the answer suddenly comes the answer to every vital question is already in you not the answer to non-vital questions I recommend that between now and dinner time we keep noble silence as the Buddha called it noble silence is to be present with people otherwise it's just noble silence between now and dinner time we don't know of course what happens to the voice in your head we'll see

[Speaker 2] (5:44:03 - 5:44:50)

sunrise another new morning we celebrate we are the new man sunrise over the mountain spreading your light over the land

[Speaker 1] (5:44:51 - 5:52:54)

the wind is getting a little warmer now out there it's beautiful I trust you've been going for walks one step at a time alert relaxed looking listening feeling being caressed by the wind what could you add to that by thinking about it questions maybe we will look at some questions this afternoon remaining rooted within feeling your presence and if you can feel your presence it's not your presence it's just the way you're speaking because

it's intimately you that's why I call it your presence you are presence language always creates a separation but that's how it is feeling yourself as your own presence if then any question survives in your head you could either ask it or wait for the answer within yourself and when you are present within non-vital questions won't survive in the head they are recognized as not truly alive abstract in medieval times the mind created abstractions how many angels can dance on the head of a needle or something like that or abstractions that created the religions not the original creator but subsequent developments the church split into two can't remember when one and a half thousand years ago over the dispute whether the holy spirit emanated from the father or also from the son getting lost in thought and they could kill you if you didn't agree with them so vital question concerns you perhaps your suffering if there is any left or if anybody wants to ask or wants to say anything about something that happened here a realization or whatever it is you're welcome pain body questions are usually helpful to everybody I don't mean questions that are asked by the pain body they would be very angry questions but questions concerning what you have observed or maybe someone very close to you occasionally you get questions asked by the pain body in one group we were talking about the pain body and if the an active pain body if there is a pain body in any member of the audience who is at that moment active that doesn't feel good because the pain body so occasionally it happens that somebody runs out of the room when we talk about the pain body and they're not going to the toilet and in one group we talked about the pain body and an angry voice in the back said I have a question when do we start meditating if we may start with one question somebody asked me yesterday and I didn't quite give a whole answer if we could start with that person who asked me yesterday about fear arising during meditation fear and fearlessness if I remember correctly hello

[Speaker 2] (5:52:56 - 5:53:50)

yesterday I experienced during the meditation a shifting between anxiety and somewhat fear and fearlessness and I realized a connection I realized I was going deeper into a problem that I also face in my everyday life somewhat I get sometimes I get this anxiety seems to coming out of nowhere and sometimes I feel yeah absolutely nearly fearless for even very difficult situations so I hope that you could give me some ideas about that and how I can work with it also give me some truth about that and also how I can work with it in daily life when I experience it

[Speaker 1] (5:53:51 - 6:21:47)

thank you fear is the universal condition virtually everyone unless they are very deeply rooted within experiences some form of fear there are different forms of fear anxiety even stress is a form of fear stress of I'm not going to get there in time nervousness and more extreme forms up to panic dread most pain bodies contain I would say really every pain body contains fear as part of its make up but fear is not always immediately

recognizable as fear fear can be can shift and be translated into something that looks very different for example anger if you look behind anger you would always find fear I saw a little puppy at a dog training class that I attended with our with our dog and there was all the puppies were running around playing and then a new one came in whose behavior was clearly dysfunctional because he was quite he could see how aggression and fear go together he would always run into a corner and then if any dog came up to him he would suddenly become aggressive and try to bite and you can see fear and anger they go together even in an animal an animal is not really anger but something almost like anger so in everyone there is residual fear no matter what your thoughts are even if you are free of thought it can still be there that is part of the stored up old emotion of fear then there is the fear that is created by certain types of thinking any type of future thinking my life situation or my problematic situation even one thought coming into your head I would like to get to know that person and very uncertain anything could happen to me so of course when you project yourself into future you immediately meet the uncertainty the complete uncertainty you could lose something very important to you including your body so the fear is created new fear is created through not being present because in the present moment there is usually nothing to fear you can usually check that for yourself most fear is created through leaving the present moment mentally projecting yourself into a possible future which doesn't look good hope is the opposite of that you project a future and that same thought can quickly shift into maybe it's not going to work out and so you can experience almost the same thought that gives you hope for a moment while you lie in bed at 4 o'clock in the morning and then it shifts it flips oh, maybe it won't happen I won't get that and fear immediately comes the gap between I believe it was the founder of gestalt therapy who said anxiety is in the gap between now and then because that is the so we have the that's a mind created gap and the mind which is compulsion to move into the future creates a continuous undercurrent of fear it tries to control the future it can't and so it's fearful it tries to cope with the future an imagined situation you can't you don't have the resource to cope with the future nobody does because it doesn't even exist so life does not give you the resource to cope with the future the strength or whatever knowledge you need the insight, the realization people have piled up in their mind a sequence of things that are problematic could go wrong might not happen should happen and then of course you can't cope with the future it doesn't exist you can always cope with this moment this moment is always simple if it's an emergency it's very likely you will be forced into a presence and you will do something without needing to think something else takes over some people have experienced that when accidents were about to happen suddenly an inner shift occurred all fear was there initially and then suddenly just as it was about to happen all fear left them there were many reports and there was a sense of being alive and out of that if action was possible action came so are you adding to the residual fear that is still in you that's question one am I adding to the fear by identifying with some kind of thought about the future or it could be a thought about somebody else that I feel close to and whose actions and whose life it could be a child

and grown up child or teenage child could be anybody else close to you you don't know where they are and what they are doing or you know they are engaged in dangerous activities and so many parents have the need to control the lives of their children they want to protect them from possible harm and even after they are grown up they still want to they get extremely worried about what they are into and yet what they want to spare them suffering and now if you could truly do that if you were omnipotent and you could spare your child or the grown up child suffering there would be no development in the child whatsoever up to a point the arising of consciousness happens through suffering through making mistakes the most unprofitable life would be a life in which no mistakes were made it's impossible but only theoretically possible so suffering is the spiritual teacher until you reach the point where you are now when you suddenly realize I don't need suffering anymore because you choose presence up to that point in your life which is consciousness through suffering most of it is self-created that's how it works and so you have to allow other humans you can help of course as much as you can you help a very young child you have to prevent from getting too close to the window to allow other humans to make mistakes to do what they feel it's right to do even if you know very well this is wrong and will lead to suffering instead of lying awake all night worrying about what they are doing there's nothing you can do so the fear can arise because you have thoughts about somebody close to you or yourself and when there's enough presence and you can recognize that as I'm creating fear my mind is creating fearful thoughts and you believe in every fearful thought and then the corresponding emotion comes many people shake with fear in their warm bed in the middle of the night to bring you back to reality the reality test is a useful question that I may have mentioned before you could put it in your room now what is there to fear at this moment because if it's not now where is it?

and then you open your eyes you look around the room or switch on the light where is the monster where is the dreadful event in my head and then there's the residual fear that you still carry even if your mind is not creating it it may suddenly come up it could be an isolated emotion perhaps drifting up from the pain body and you are not even thinking about future and it can come in meditation it often does because meditation is going deeper into yourself and what the ego fears most is its own end it fears your presence so when there's a letting go into the present moment a relaxing the tightness the contraction with which the fear was being held down opens and often what comes up is fear it's the fear of the end of the egoic entity the fear of the end of my problems the fear of the end of me as a mind made entity so when it happens whether it's a thought about future or whether it just seems to come by itself if it's created by a thought you can see the fallacy of the thought it's about future then you don't believe in the thought anymore and you bring attention back into the body or to your breath and then the fear also goes but if it's not associated with the thought it's present so you feel it fully instead of thinking about it instead of thinking how can I get rid of this or what can I do about it or I don't want to feel this are you arguing with the present moment what is is at this

moment inside you and if there's a quiver of fear say that is the fear and then you don't say anything anymore you simply allow it to be there it doesn't feel pleasant but it won't kill you it has killed some people but not people who were aware of it and allowed it to be but people who were totally identified with it completely identified with that emotion then it could kill you but if you are aware of it and notice it's not going to kill me it may not feel pleasant it's like feeling almost a physical feeling of unwellness there it is and you feel it and you may sometimes feel that it wants to become thoughts the emotion wants to become thoughts or the mind is attempting to explain the fear that you feel by creating some image and it's also the residual fear that is in you sometimes the mind doesn't know what to do with it why do I feel fear?

and then it creates some explanation or some image why you feel fear that works the other way around so fear can be created by a fearful thought but a fearful thought can also be created by the residual fear in you that's already there you may have dreams nightmares when you feel intense fear in a dream and you may believe that the image that you are dreaming is creating the fear the monster that you are trying to get away from in the dream is creating the fear it's not the fear is the residual fear that lives in you probably associated with the emotions that are together to form the pain body so what you are experiencing is the residual fear and the mind needs to somehow make sense of this so it attempts to find an image to explain it and in the dream it becomes a nightmare in a very unconscious person or in somebody in whom the fear in daily life can turn into so called paranoia which is a complete misperception of reality in which you see other people or groups of people as your enemies who want to do you harm so you interpret what the ego this is only a more pronounced form the egoic state is very suspicious of other people it wants to use them it also fears them it misinterprets very often their behavior so there is element of paranoia in every ego the fear of others even the need to have enemies to make them into enemies and then it's more pronounced than it's recognized but what is it? it is the mind's attempt to explain the intense fear that I feel and therefore it says it cannot explain it but the mind wants some explanation so it creates a reality that seems to explain the continuous fear that I feel a fearful reality it doesn't know that the fear that you feel is here at the present moment for it so it's an attempt of the mind to explain and it becomes unreality so the quickest way beyond fear yes detect if it's created by a thought you can see the thought and then you can drop the thought or your belief in the thought and come back to the present moment or the residual fear that is in you that wants to become thought too and if possible watch the fear as an energy that lives in you so that it doesn't turn into thinking so you watch it directly it doesn't feel good but it's like bad weather inside no more so bad weather outside is not that bad it's actually quite nice when you accept it when the mind says this is dreadful weather it's dreadful but when you allow it to be even so called bad weather is quite beautiful so you allow the fear to be as it is you give it space to be because that's the form that this moment takes you give it space to be so to speak it's almost a metaphorical way of putting it the space around the fear gets bigger and then

you notice there's actually a vast space the more you allow it the more you become aware of space around it inner space around the fear the more there is a distance between you and the fear and there is the fear what before was overpowering you didn't even want to look at it or feel it suddenly is realized as a tiny energy movement compared to the vastness of space around it and that happens when you allow it to be and watch it it becomes transmuted even the residual fear from the past becomes transmuted you're very much aware of the fear influencing your thinking controlling your thinking you remember the two movements fear creates can create when you're not very present fear creates certain thoughts fear thoughts or the other way fear thoughts create fear the residual fear creates also more thoughts when you're not very present people talk about trusting in life they say how can I learn to trust in life you can't learn to trust and that's the greatest thing if you have no trust in life then you're a little fearful entity running around continuously in fear you have no trust how can I learn to trust what is trust trust is simply this it's no more than the absence of fear trust is your natural state fear obscures your natural state when fear is gone trust is there it was always there trust is I trust in life where is life here, now and then you notice that the enormous gap between what the mind imagines life to be which is fearful and the reality of what is reality compared to what the mind creates as my mind made reality reality is very benevolent the mind reality is very harsh what the mind creates as its reality so when you look at people's lives the suffering is derived from thought believing in all the thoughts that the mind throws up about situations my life and so on without that there would only ever be the benevolence of life at this moment and at this when you trust in this moment which is trusting in life life looks after you it's like learning to that you don't need to struggle to keep above water when you learn to swim at first you panic you think you have to move as fast as you can to keep above water and many people live their whole life like that trying to keep their head above water they never learn all you have to just breathe and the water actually carries you you hardly need to move at all you just go to the flowers and say they are not anxious about tomorrow they are not struggling they are not making effort and yet life when he said father it means the one life the one consciousness life looks after them if they can live like that surely you can live in the same way where you feel you are not struggling to live or to make a living but realize and are open to being lived by life to become to be an expression of the one life not a little entity trying to make it and so life lives through you how else could it be and then without the separation between me and life life comes to an end when that separation comes to an end between me and life I am life there is not me and life so work with the fear that is still there always bring acceptance to it don't make it into a problem don't try to figure out how to get rid of it be present with it it is just like as if a dark cloud just watch it and then it wants to create it wants to move into your mind you watch it keep it where it is it is here and then it tries again and the mind says I don't understand this why am I so fearful never mind just watch it there is another question

[Speaker 3] (6:21:50 - 6:23:09)

hello thank you very much I have a question that awoke me at 3am this morning and I am hoping you might answer it so I am not woken up again it was triggered off by comments you made on presence you mentioned about presence being connected with the feeling of our aliveness and then you talked about feeling as you walk across the grass perhaps out in nature and I wondered whether you think it has anything to do with a sense called the kinesthetic sense which apparently means motion feeling the feeling of motion and how deeply presence is connected with the kinesthetic sense and you also mentioned listening to silence and I wondered apparently there is a vestibular sense or proprioceptive sense of movement against the eardrum and I was wondering whether you think that the kinesthetic sense the proprioceptive sense is deeply rooted in our ability to sense our own presence to tune into presence thank you

[Speaker 1] (6:23:10 - 6:23:24)

and then what happened that night at 3 o'clock did you leave that thought and re-entered presence I re-entered presence and I felt

[Speaker 3] (6:23:24 - 6:23:45)

that what I was feeling I was feeling my I believe I was feeling my own presence but I then felt that what I was feeling was movement and then my mind took over and said well presence is feeling motion and then my presence was disturbed by the thought that it is feeling motion

[Speaker 1] (6:23:55 - 6:52:54)

and I don't know if I can give an answer but we'll see the mind tries to understand what presence is because that's what the mind does the mind tries to figure things out to work it out to get a hold of it to grasp it somehow so that I can understand what presence really is and unfortunately it can't ever it can only understand certain things about it when the mind talks about presence through thought you can talk about it the most the mind can do is point to it by saying this or that that's fancy in the right direction but it cannot understand what presence is so this is the reason why because presence is the essence for example of Zen Buddhism and this is why many people study Zen for 20 or 30 years and still don't know what it is this is why an otherwise extremely interesting writer philosopher Arthur Koestler traveled I believe in the 50s to Japan to write a book about Zen Buddhism he had a highly developed mind so he interviewed and spent several months there and finally he wrote a book which was not his best probably his worst some of his books are very good but very intellectual but penetrating analysis of certain things but he could never understand Zen at all because he tried to understand it through the mind and he finally came to the conclusion that it was absolute nonsense with which the Zen monks were only too ready to agree yes you're right it's absolute nonsense nonsense and a great hindrance in the arising of presence is a developed mind like yours trying to figure out what it is and not being able to step beyond the stream of

thinking because presence is the cessation of thought without loss of consciousness now you have a definition the cessation of thought without loss of consciousness wow where do you go from there? more thought?

so that takes you to the edge and whatever you say beyond that it can only be more thought but not the cessation of thought not presence the alertness that is there when thought subsides whatever else can be said about it is peripheral about not it you can talk about it so you can talk about yes you could write a PhD but it would never touch presence would it take anybody into presence? I don't know maybe there would be one page you say this page or page 300 of my PhD is the edge read up to there and then throw it away so you could ask what is the relationship between presence and the senses what is the relationship between presence and perception between presence and the feeling of one could say presence can flow into anything presence can flow into the auditory sense so let's see what it is like on a practical level you are listening you are listening so intensely that no thought arises because any thought would diminish your ability to listen you are listening to the parable that I believe Jesus used you are somebody is going to arrive you don't know when he is going to come the master is going to come home the servant is waiting he has to be alert so that he can hear the master when he comes he may be very quiet so he remains awake listening already presence is there then a noise arises the door opens space and an object in space the object here is an auditory object it could be a visual object it could be an inner object like a thought but what we call listening really wasn't really listening because when you were listening for a long time there was no noise to listen to it's like being in a completely dark room and trying to see but intensely looking but there is nothing to see or looking at the sky that's totally blue the vast expanse of sky and it has no object in it perhaps the sun is just behind you on the horizon but the entire sky is so clear and you are looking up into the sky and there is nothing there to see for you so nothing there is no object consciousness or you are listening and there is no noise no object arises no auditory object arises in the space the space that is presence the vast space that is presence the vast stillness that is presence or it could be that you are listening a sound arises and subsides so anything that arises in presence is an object in consciousness whereas presence is consciousness itself doesn't matter what feeling or whatever it is bodily feeling, whatever arises you have two dimensions object consciousness which is a normal state for most humans which means they only know themselves through objects that arise in their consciousness every thought every emotion every sense perception every experience is a form, an object in the field of consciousness now it happens to some human beings who suddenly realize another dimension in themselves and when it happens accidentally it is usually because an object in their life that they had identified with dissolves we call it disaster or death the great loss the big enterprise that I built up collapses the wife dies the child dies the house crumbles everything collapses under me the object that I had identified with dissolves and that leaves a hole in their life a big gaping hole now some people cannot fill up that hole quickly enough it is too active

again the enterprise collapses ok, I am going to build up a new one another 20 years or you allow that to be because it drives you into surrender something disappears from you the fabric of your existence has a hole in it and often it happens to people through a great loss or death in their lives suddenly an inner shift happens and there is suddenly enormous peace serenity, aliveness and they don't know what happened to them it is because the space what we could call space consciousness which has no form which is consciousness itself came through that hole of death and destruction death and destruction which look dreadful from the point of view of the human mind the ego are also ultimately benevolent because through death and destruction a hole appears in your existence which consisted of objects, my life this is my life there may be some of you who experienced that suddenly things all collapsed around you and so through that there is an opening and through that comes what Buddhists call the deathless which is the realization of the formless dimension of life which is consciousness itself the space that you are the consciousness that you are so to some it comes through disaster and death and to others it comes through realization through the help of a spiritual teaching and to many it comes a combination of great loss in your own life plus a spiritual teaching and the two come together this is why many of you are here there are quite a few I am certain of that who experienced this or that disaster in their lives and for many people that creates the first opening so we have the dimensions of consciousness object consciousness thoughts one thing after another experiences things that are all important every object is so important and then what is it that makes that whole thing possible space the underlying formless pure consciousness that you are stillness presence it becomes presence when you know it when it recognizes itself but you can't not through thought what I have just said recognize it presence is the famous explanation that the Zen teacher gave who became famous because he never explained anything what is Zen they asked him and he would just go that's also the best answer to your question did you want to ask a question?

thank you can you explain to us are there any differences between male and female that are easier for men and which are easier for females? thank you I'm stuck in a male body for a while but I already from what I have observed and what I also mentioned briefly in the power of now one difference is that first of all both men and women have very active minds both men and women have pain bodies generally speaking the major obstacle and it's not ultimately an obstacle because once you work with an obstacle it becomes a help the major obstacle let's use that word for a moment for men is mind identification with head mental mental the major obstacle for women and against many exceptions is the pain body they are related it's not to say that in some cases identified excessively with thought women have that too but men have it even more an active pain body men have that too very much and women even more women have also the collective female pain body because for thousands of years women have been put in a position of almost slavery by men but the shift from female oriented society to male oriented society happened several thousand years ago very earlier societies most goddess god figures

were female and then the shift happened because it happened because humans moved more and more into thinking and then the shift of the divine was then began to assume a male form and they wanted to need to exclude the female so female was then subjected to considerable suffering as simply because they were women almost sold they could be sold and bought and used there are teachers that we know from the past not anymore now there are many female teachers and more and more are coming but most of them that we know from the past seem to be male probably not because the realization came only to men it's because society wouldn't even recognize the female as a teacher there may be some exceptions to that also at first Christianity tried to exclude the female altogether so instead of having as a kind of representation the father, the mother and the son they had the father, the holy spirit and the son and the holy spirit is probably male too and it's only later that the female goddess figure of Mary became in some parts of the church very important and so the female was brought back that way although originally Mary was not important at all those head dominated people they were all men who tried to figure out what we need to believe in they wanted to exclude the female or the female so it came back so in some places virgin Mary is more important than Jesus people are much more interested in Mary than in Jesus it's a representation if you know so when it is expressed when presence expresses itself first there is the formless emanation of presence that is a male or a female body there that comes through stillness the formless emanation of presence whether there is a woman or a man here in the stillness the two merge into one stillness is the oneness but as soon as presence flows into words which is how a spiritual teaching happens out of the field of presence come words and the words carry the energy of presence still that's why they are not just information the words that come are charged with presence so to speak and that's hard to figure out through the mind but that's how it works and they already they flow into the form of the words there may be a difference now many humans who live who are rooted in presence you can hardly say whether they are male or female of course biologically they remain either male or female but their energy field is quite balanced quite balanced in many so the the pure femaleness the pure maleness there is a balance between male and female in many spiritual teachers and in some when they get older you can't even say is that a man or a woman can't tell anymore the main thing is the to see a woman needs to be very conscious of the the female the pain body because there is the accumulation of female pain the pain body has a share in the collective female pain and that's why it comes when the nature of your form as female is most pronounced during the time of menstruation which could be a joyful time but for many women it is not not yet it is when the female pain body becomes activated often and that is something to work with for a woman to know to become particularly alert as it is about to happen and many women are doing that now so they bring alertness to whatever feeling they have they notice the first impulse when it comes the first and then wants to become a thought and watch it so ultimately the basic nature of humans is the same the emphasis may be different between male and female women are more connected with their body so often body awareness is easier for women than for men they have that natural another aspect

of it is that in the universe is the receptive principle is the allowing principle it is a principle that is expressed through a gesture that you find sometimes in Mary or other female figures from other cultures the gesture of like this holding, nurturing allowing and so as such it should be easier for a woman to allow what is to be and to contain it in that space of aware presence to be the container for what happens so I may have mentioned briefly in The Power of Now that in some ways one could say it should and could be easier for women and this is happening now there is quite an acceleration in the development of women that sometimes surpasses that of men here perhaps the number of men and women is equal more or less but there are some groups in which two thirds not uncommon of course are female many many teachers are arising now female teachers as that is wonderful to see and there is a great demand for that the female principle on the whole of course will come back very strongly it is part of what will save the world from an over emphasis on mind it is ultimately not our destiny to recreate female deities that can be a little temporary way of reaching that which is beyond form but it is not our destiny to recreate that but really it is both for the man and the woman to find within themselves that which is beyond male and female temporarily yes but finding that which is beyond where the two are one at some point they split and one became two the big bang male female one became two two you may know the teaching the Indian teaching about two non-duality there is only one quite a beautiful teaching as long as it doesn't become an intellectual game or debating society but otherwise a profound teaching that ultimately there is one there is only one the essential nature of life is oneness and duality is has nothing to do with the manifested world the sense-perceived world not ultimate reality there is wisdom embedded in language so if you look at Advaita A, the syllable A I don't know very much Sanskrit but A means no it denies Dvay comes from the Sanskrit two which is the German word Zwei Danish may be similar I don't know for two comes from old Sanskrit because many words in our European languages go back to India nobody knows how and why Zwei is two and related to that Zwei are other words like Verzweiflung Despair Zweifel Doubt these are all words that are based on the number two so you can see with duality comes despair comes doubt comes me and the other the separation and it's amazing how to see that certain words contain wisdom

[Speaker 3] (6:53:01 - 6:53:28)

I would like to ask on the matter of emotions you've been talking about it today but I would like to ask about the expression of emotions from my own personal history I can say that I believe I'm better at presence after I've started being able to express anger for instance and I see my children they are very present and then they get angry and away it goes so you've been talking

[Speaker 1] (6:53:31 - 7:00:12)

about emotions thank you, good question there are quite a few people who do not

express emotions fully or don't express them at all perhaps even more so in northern countries the further north you go the less they express their emotions that's how it seems to be maybe it's too cold to express your emotions now the practice I describe of observing your emotions allowing them to be for somebody who habitually does not express emotions it is not usually the best way to try and observe his or her emotions because they may not even know what emotions they are having they may be so much pushed down so particularly for those people who have been suppressing emotions it is very helpful to express the emotions if possible without injuring anybody or yourself to allow yourself to express emotions and witness that at the same time the expression itself would not free you because emotions if they are not observed tend to renew themselves through renewed thinking because there is this vicious circle between emotion and thought processes so the expression alone is not enough because you would simply be stuck with it and express the anger because the anger dissipates somewhat as you express it but if you are not conscious of the relationship between your thought processes you get renewed anger and so you would be going to the same or other therapists and hitting the pillows for 20 or 30 years not realizing that through your thought processes you are continuously recreating emotion and you are identifying so much so without the presence expression is better than repression repression can make you ill but you can feel it and present and watch it as an energy field so that through the watching it becomes depersonalized so that you don't feel you are not totally stuck in it and then you can express it hit something not a person if possible the pillow if it is anger or scream and it feels good perhaps and feel the raw energy of it like fire and feel it wow and if you allow it completely and express it it can even very quickly turn around and then you can do something useful you have enormous energy and suddenly it gets turned around and it's just it can shift from anger to just being intense energy ok now I am going to clean my room not angry anymore simply with energy you could also clean your room still being angry but that's not good cleaning because you would be cleaning on a material level on an energetic level you would be polluting your room and so to become free for a while some people need to express fully and then a time comes when there is enough presence and you have expressed it then you can gradually more and more work on the inner level and bring presence to it on the inner not that you ever hold it down if it wants to and needs to express itself you may do something maybe you can transform it into physical movement vigorous movement or whatever it is and watch but always be there as a witness at some point you may find that you have a choice emotion arises you can express it or not express it and it can simply be transformed or transmuted to bring presence to it you will know in the moment whether it needs to express itself or not if you have never or rarely expressed emotion then by all means allow yourself to express it without indulging and without personalizing it recognizing it as energy no more just as energy and watch yes northern people English German Scandinavian are not usually that outgoing I heard a little joke I hope nobody is offended by it it concerns one of the Scandinavian countries doesn't matter which and it says it's a famous joke I don't know they are like ketchup bottles you know like Heinz ketchup you

have to shake first nothing comes out and then it comes all at once

[Speaker 3] (7:00:24 - 7:00:40)

there is a little four letter word that hasn't been mentioned at all throughout this weekend and that is love

[Speaker 1] (7:00:42 - 7:00:43)

thank you

[Speaker 3] (7:00:44 - 7:00:51)

if I can just turn that into a question rather than a statement in the position of witness where is love

[Speaker 1] (7:00:51 - 7:11:24)

thank you love together with a three letter word God maybe those two are the most misused words of the language now I may have mentioned the word God once or twice here in some gatherings that word also is never mentioned I believe I said you are God in disguise so I usually avoid both love and God because they are naturally present when you are present because your presence is the presence of God in this world the light of consciousness is the light of the one and love is what naturally arises out of the space of presence when the other is no longer seen as other when the separation that comes from being identified with thought that sense of separation between me and the other being trapped in a form and identifying with a form then you cannot recognize the other as ultimately one with yourself and when you cannot recognize the other as deeply deep down one with yourself all you see is the otherness that's the egoic state all you see in other humans is their otherness and that's why and that's not a pleasant reality that's why Jean-Paul Sartre said hell is other people it's the ego speaking so when you are identified with form you see only another form there is no realization of connectedness or that you are the realization that you are an expression of the same one life the same one consciousness in another temporary form you don't know all you can see is the other and so the more deeply you are identified with form the more suffering there is and if there is such a thing as an abstract thing you could say it is complete identification with form and that is no more than the complete absence of the realization even an inkling of oneness now there are many humans who are identified with form but not totally there is an inkling there is some sensing sometimes selflessly help someone or feel the other person's suffering have empathy with another human being so love is of course the realization that there is no other love arises out of the recognition of one really love is the realization one we are one ultimately and you cannot do that when you apply when you meet another human being through thought because thought separates, divides classifies so our entire gathering is about the arising of a state of consciousness in which

love becomes possible as a natural and an integral part of that state of consciousness love is comes out of the spaciousness when you realize you are not the form but the formless one life and everything else also is not the form it is only a temporary appearance it is the formless one life meeting it yourself that's love meeting the other as yourself and so the only reason why we haven't used the word is that it's been overused and it's there naturally it is possible that the Buddha never used any single positive term like stating something like peace at the moment we don't know he may not even have used that nobody knows exactly which sutras actually reflect his words but probably he only pointed to the end of suffering maybe he said emptiness he didn't need to say more what's left? what is emptiness? why is it that the Buddha always looks so peaceful the emphasis that Buddhism puts on it is really inseparable from love because compassion is also the realization of oneness it's just a different aspect of it so love and compassion are really one they are inseparable so Buddhism looks at it more from the point of view of compassion because it reduces it to something that's not quite as profound of what real compassion is mid-light is suffering with another person but true compassion does not mean that you suffer with the other person true compassion and I mentioned it briefly in the power of now arises from the realization of oneness the empathy with the suffering as this form because you yourself are a form and you have experienced what suffering is so you have empathy with the suffering of other life forms because you yourself have known suffering maybe still know it from time to time that's you as the form and then you are in touch with that and that presence in presence there is no presence does not suffer and you bring that to this encounter with another human being the two come together the empathy with the suffering of the other human being which comes from identifying with form always goes back to that and allowing that to be the oneness of all life and that ultimately who they are in the depths of their being cannot be touched by the suffering perhaps it is the suffering that will actually get them there so compassion and love are one there is no wanting in love the misuse of love that is expressed very nicely in the Spanish language where the word for I love you is the same as I want you and of course that's very true as far as the ego is concerned so there is love you look with love with gentleness with compassion upon the world stillness you look upon a tree you love that tree it's reduced if you say oh I love that tree it's deeper than it's so much it's so much deeper than that it reduces it because I love is used so much in so many superficial senses I love ice cream I love suffering love is the essence of our gathering in order not to reduce it to a concept I didn't mention the word there was another second question

[Speaker 2] (7:11:28 - 7:12:10)

a lot of western therapeutic practices focusing focuses on establishing a healthy sense of self now according to a lot of spiritual teachings including your own the whole notion is a construction can you does that that's question number one does that make is that so and two does that then make therapy and therapeutic practices in general futile

[Speaker 1] (7:12:10 - 7:32:04)

thank you there are of course a lot of therapeutic practices that do not get you beyond getting back to normality so that you can function relatively well in this world they may cure you of a neurosis or whatever it is and cannot they want the normal state and normal means ultimately insane so they bring you back to the normal state to normal insanity and then you can go back and be a useful member of the organization but the question is interesting do we need to do we need to go through the development and growth of ego before we can go beyond and it does seem that yes we need to go so far it's been the case that most humans needed to go through the ego state but at what stage of life that varies you could say well do we need to develop a fully functioning and healthy ego and then leave it behind I don't believe that's the case because a fully functioning and healthy ego ultimately doesn't even exist because dysfunction is part of the ego but it does seem to be the case a child grows up at a certain age two years old one and a half years old I don't know when something starts to develop in them before when they were one year old they looked at you and beautiful there was a light shining through their eyes there were no concepts yet there was no me image yet and perhaps although there was a light shining through it was pure being pure and you look back into their eyes and you go wow this is such a pure being here surely this baby is already fully enlightened and you meet this baby again a year later just as it's screaming and say that's my toy not yours give it back to me it seems that the concept of mine their name identifying with the first object the toy experiencing suffering when it breaks or it's taken away from them because the ego is already growing I've identified with the first identification it's my toy here it's mine mine and then can you tell a child at that stage of confusion the toy is not you must let go of ego it seems that humans have to move through they have to develop an ego and they do is it a healthy ego is it a well functioning ego of course some egos are more dysfunctional than others that is true but ultimately if you remain stuck in ego you will manifest considerable dysfunction in your life and if you do not manifest considerable dysfunction in your life then somewhere something else is already coming through that is not ego it is the function of the conscious therapist no matter what stage that human is at to bring another dimension first I'm going to sort you out and then we'll go beyond that but as that person comes with whatever problems they have you can still apply what you have learned the apparatus of your therapeutic tools or skills but if there is any true power to your therapeutic tools or skills that power is hiding and this flows into whatever you do with that patient and it may be that you touch them some people work with the body and the mind together and they touch they may touch the patient or do body work at the same time and what is the state that you are in as you touch that human being intense presence then something happens that is the therapeutic touch as a listening presence and there are some psychoanalysts and psychoanalysis as you know is the Freudian school that is still in use here and there and is quite intellectual quite mental and quite judgmental it classifies things symptoms and calls them this, that, that and very

impersonal so very much intellectual and yet even there there are some psychoanalysts who have become great healers not because of their what they apply but because after 20 years of practice they learn to sit still and listen and in that healing happens in whatever form so you can break through the egoic consciousness one could say at almost any stage you can break through from being a criminal which means a dysfunctional ego to suddenly embody the arising presence you can even break through from a mental disorder it has happened and become present you can hear voices and become so present that you simply remain there as the witness and then the voices become tired and subside I've known one case where a person was deeply disturbed because he could hear voices that were telling him to do things and sometimes he acted on them and did mad things and then it was pointed out to him that there is no need to act he can simply be there as the witness of the voice without reacting to the voice and that's what he did and the voices carried on they were angry in many cases and after a while they subsided and became still a similar case in the film that you may have seen A Beautiful Mind which is about a psychiatrist who is insane he has a mental disorder he says hallucinations at some point he realizes that what he sees is not real and he is able to it's not actually said so in the film he is able to witness it and that's the beginning of his healing he realizes that these things actually get strengthened through reaction so he allows them to be and he knows there is a knowing now and the ability to witness and to watch of course there are cases where the mind is so disturbed that it seems there is nothing you can do this person needs some healing on another level there may be people who are continuously talking with so many forms paranoia that I have personal experience with because somebody in my family suffered from that illness so I observed it very closely miracles are always possible in some cases it seems a person needs to be treated in a conventional way to have a semblance of normality some people cannot be reached anymore through words so there are all kinds of cases but I would not say that you need to develop a fully functioning ego before they can go beyond it for most people who are not clinically insane only normal insane they are at some point the ego has its dysfunctions and it is already a form of insanity and at some point you can jump off it means simply from mind and emotions to be able to bring a witnessing ability to mind and emotions that's the greatest healer and sometimes the most people that you would never have thought could do that can do it as a therapist your main healing device is yourself that's all I know secondary comes whatever you have learned but the main healing is the presence that you embody as you sit there with that other human being who is no other ultimately and so there is one beautiful school of therapy called Rogerian therapy and very few masters very few humans can truly practice and Roger says all that you need to do is not judge and simply listen be there as a listener and they try to learn that and most patients I have met some people who have visited Rogerian therapists and they said he seemed completely uninterested in what I was saying and he hardly said anything I'm not going back to him and yet potentially it's the most spiritual of all schools of therapy because it emphasizes stillness and presence as the only true healer and even if you are confronted with an insane person who may perhaps to

alleviate temporarily extreme symptoms you may have to give medication because some symptoms are absolutely insane even there don't forget the main healer is yourself the presence that you embody and some doctors know that also although they are still functioning as doctors whoever comes into their space first of all there's a complete current of attention and awareness that flows out of that whatever is needed comes and it may incorporate what you have learned or it may come from a level that is beyond what you have learned and that's all I know that that is the healer no matter where you are at that level a fully functioning ego no, because that would mean you're trying to create something that is impossible because it's only to the extent that you go beyond ego that you become a fully functioning a true human being it seems however that every child has to go through the development of ego as a still presence while that happens and occasionally point out a few things for example when the pain body comes to the child point it out not while it happens but afterwards ask the child questions about it what it felt like when he or she was throwing him or herself on the floor screaming ask questions about it so that the child can begin to become aware of it witness it talk about your own pain body to the child and then if you have children they will grow up in a more conscious environment will they still develop an ego? probably it seems that they have to go through that all the way to the age of 50, 60 or 70 until finally things in their life collapses things around them begin to collapse and finally a big chunk breaks off the egoic structure and so it's wonderful to see I've had people coming who are 18, 19, 20 already responding to presence and yes it's often not to the point of clinical insanity but often very dysfunctional egos are also those that can suddenly wake up the murderer in prison some have become spiritual masters we may need to end this session now tomorrow which never comes there's another session perhaps some more questions we'll see what happens we don't know what the now will present us with beautiful rain is falling you may get wet as you walk out of here and you can practice non-resistance a friend of mine was very proud it was years ago many years ago I talked to him about the possibility of not resisting what is and he said this is wonderful I did what you suggested I could do and I got totally drenched he said and I simply imagined that I was a duck now for him that worked I didn't tell him I didn't want to spoil this because I didn't tell him that a duck never gets drenched hence the expression water off a duck's back because they remain always dry but it worked for him he became one really what he was saying he became one with that moment which was the wetness there wasn't me and the wetness he became one with the water there Deva Premal and Mitten are giving their concert tonight which is not really a concert as you will see but a meditation presence through sound and the absence of sound

[Speaker 2] (7:36:08 - 7:37:42)

It's a brand new morning We celebrate We are The new man Sunrise Over the mountain Spreading your light Over the land We are still here

[Speaker 1] (7:38:03 - 8:29:31)

Make sure you are not half gone already Are you going back into reality or unreality? Be careful that your life isn't reduced to becoming to being no more than a bridge between past and future always coming from there and going there and being pulled along the stream of time as often as possible break the continuity of past and future the stream of time access the timeless dimension in you by singling out this moment mostly If you stop anybody anywhere go to a big city and you ask them what are you doing? They'll tell you the story of where they've just come from and where they are going to complete that movement I've just come from this important meeting I'm on my way to the airport and catch a plane to go to an even more important meeting and what you get or whatever other answer it may be I'm going to spend another boring day in the office to keep myself and my family alive or you can ask somebody sitting on a bench and he says my whole life has gone to pieces and there's no point in carrying on that's why I'm just sitting here There too the story absorbs your life and if you could single out what is your effectiveness in this world but brings in a liveness and a higher intelligence yes, you're on your way from that meeting to the other even more important meeting but what about now? this moment the car stopped at a traffic light window is slightly open bird is sitting on the branch of a tree and you can see that the sunlight feel yourself breathing and the aliveness inside you the presence that you are and the reality of now always exists outside of the story that you carry which is no more than the sequence of thoughts in your head yes, that is there also of course it's one dimension of life but if that's all it's one dimension of concepts it's very much like an inferior work of fiction that exists only for its structural tension but no deeper content in it you know works that are very interesting to read what's going to happen next but once you've read that book and you know what happens in the end you would never go back to it it would be completely pointless because you now know what happens in the end it exists without any depth only you're reading it with a structural tension is pulling you along you want to know what's happening next or if anybody told you before you got to the end of the book what happens in the end would have destroyed the whole thing for you and that is just a work of many works are just fiction to keep your mind busy and to give you a reflection that you won't die except for this character no don't tell me that you've swiped it all because beyond that there's nothing on the page except the tension towards the next moment but the character lacks depth every description lacks depth so there's no point in reading it again if you read a true work of literature there may be some structural tension also there on one descriptive passage of a character or whatever for a long time you can go back to it read it many times the outcome is not that important there's the depth every moment and that means it's a work of literature that nobody knows exactly where the borderline is and in some works you say well there's some depth there you know is it just fiction and so your life is it cheap fiction if you're only interested in the next thing it becomes cheap fiction lacking any depth and unfortunately many lives people's lives have become that what's the next thing and of course you die it all resolves itself eventually all the problems finally get resolved they have to because everybody who's involved in the fiction is going to die including yourself oh it all works somehow but that

is the reduction of one's life you live on the surface it's just the surface of things so that's another question you can ask yourself what is the story at this moment of me you see the story and then you go beyond the story underneath the story now the story is a sequence of thoughts it's always the next, the next, the next now thoughts are quite far removed further removed from being than the immediacy of for example sense perception sense perceptions in themselves of course are also fleeting are forms that arise in your consciousness and there are some spiritual schools that despise sense perceptions even beauty say don't look it's all impermanent it's all really unreal don't look, no beauty just be totally within but there is a beauty in sense perceptions but the beauty that you see if you are present isn't really the form in the form even the beauty of the flower beauty is always something that you is deeper than the form in whatever you look at it's not just the external form there is and you can only see beauty if you see it through that in you that is deeper than the form which means the form is thought so when you are only thinking immediately thinking about what you see you don't really see beauty you attach labels to something there is no response you cannot and that's why true beauty they are not present enough to see it they may superficially glance as they are walking through a park oh pretty flowers a momentary they haven't really looked they must have a distant memory maybe once as a child they looked at a flower and realized it was beautiful oh the nice pretty flowers ok what's the next thing I have to think that's nice it's a fraction and even in that fraction they are not really seeing it or hearing it or feeling it they are the senses certain senses are very much neglected of course for contemporary humans the predominant senses are seeing and hearing and the other senses are touching or even tasting not many people are truly aware of the food the taste of the food smelling you can smell the freshness of the air you have to be present touching touch something and feel the touch of a fruit of any object in your hand another human being and be simply present with the touch you are closer to being through sense perception than you could be through thinking that's why the first step towards being is to go from the abstraction of thought to the immediacy of perception and then from there it's only a little step to realizing what's there that makes the whole perception possible the depths of presence of beingness of I am of ultimately yourself as the one who is perceiving you feel yourself as the field in which the perception occurs so to become conscious of sense perceptions including the neglected ones smelling smelling the air if you observe a dog which I've been doing more often recently you realize they inhabit quite a different reality it seems that 70% of their reality consists of smells it's the first thing they go to when they go out about things and people whatever is there the first thing they go to is smell it out and then probably the next one is hearing and the third one maybe seeing and many animals are like that so they perceive the world differently the predominant perception is smell maybe we had it once we can't retrieve that we can be happy enough if we can smell the freshness in the air the moisture after a rain shower like yesterday the moisture that rises from the ground you smell the earth the aliveness of it so as much as possible step back out of the story the past and future unfolds the story of me between past and future there is the movement

of time that eventually consumes you as that form does something to you like some dreadful disease the flux of time eventually you shrink and get old and you wither and it looks as if everybody were suffering from this what is the name of the disease what are you suffering from time it's been diagnosed as fatal it's only a question of time when it's going to end or as one man wrote to me the other day he worked out mathematically he had this image of somebody jumping off an inconceivably high cliff and then falling and the fall takes 80 years or 85 it's the average age before he or she hits bottom and he works out how many kilometers he falls in 80 years I don't remember the figure but as far as the form is concerned which includes your story you begin to hit the ground eventually and all problems are suddenly solved but there's more to who you are fortunately if that were all and everybody deep down knows that that is not all otherwise they would all be jumping out of the windows already what's the point of watching a film even to observe that and to acknowledge that and to see that wow this is amazing that is already a spiritual thing to do the simple awareness of mortality the awareness of impermanence the awareness of the fleetingness of all forms there's already a spiritual dimension present I saw a film recently whose main subject matter seemed to be death it was about three women different ages one a novelist one a temporary woman who is reading a novel I can't remember the details but it was basically about impermanence and death and some people say this film is depressing no if you truly see it it's already spiritual anything that puts you there as a witness of the impermanence of things and some films can do that or some works of literature do that you become the witness of things the short lived nature of human sins and when you are there as the witness of that without even ever having to say or think about anything else the spiritual has already arisen in you because it's the awareness that is formless the formless in you is the aware presence that is aware of the short lived nature of all forms that's why the contemplation of death has to be of course on one level something in you says and when you imagine yourself that you are in free fall and you don't know how many kilometers thousands of kilometers you are away from the bottom nobody knows and yet when you contemplate that it's almost liberating to see that it's all very insignificant because it's all destined to dissolve quite soon and then the entire world becomes only relatively important it loses its heaviness because it's all smoke it's all like clouds temporary formations and clouds are very temporary you watch a cloud for a moment and then a different shape and then it's gone so as much as possible step out of the conceptual world past, future forms all that which is destined to dissolve soon anyway go into the immediacy of sense perception yes, whatever you are hearing, touching smelling, seeing whatever the awareness the presence that enables you to perceive is the formless within the form that you perceive the attention, the alertness so in every sense perception there is hiding something that is deeper than the perception we mentioned that even in a dream that looks unreal there must be something real there and of course, yes it's the consciousness in which the dream happens and the question is the world real or unreal should not be asked on an intellectual level that will just lead to a lot of philosophy with no final answer or beliefs your own life what is real about my life ultimately I can know

for sure Descartes, the philosopher he asked that question what is it that I can know for sure he never stopped thinking and so he thought it's thinking I'm always thinking but if he had gone a step deeper he would have realized the sense of beingness or presence that is deeper than thinking the question that you are you can doubt anything but you cannot doubt that you are because you're not it's life itself I don't know what I am the form may be short-lived but the fact that there is something here that knows that the form is short-lived there is no doubt that that has reality there is something in you that is there is no doubt about that I am, that I know what I am, I don't know because that is the what is to do with form I appear as a body for a while and then perhaps I appear as a flower I appear as whatever form perhaps the I am is in every form what I am is the one I am there is no doubt that my own being the beingness that is here of course it is it's the life that I am is beyond doubt and could that be the same life and the same being and the same I am that is in every form of life the formless essence of all life and so if you can be aware that you are aware then that's enough aware of being of presence presence being self-aware through you you are it and then what you are is the temporary roles that you, disguises that you go into I am a successful businessman for a while until you hit the ground or the stock market collapses then the psychological entity hits the bottom I am a failed writer whatever I am a failed another concept in the head I am somebody who is missed out on life life passed me by where is life?

here, now it passed me by it's long since gone didn't give me what I needed so stepping out of the story the structural aspect of your form life life in form as much as possible then you access something that is deeper than past and future than the form than that which dies yourself and the world the temptation of the world is it pretends that that's all that matters matter is all that matters so it's a continuous for a while waking up out of being totally identified with the structural aspect of your life the story of me where it's coming from and where it's going and giving an ultimate importance to that relative importance yes, you do what you can now, can only do it now can only do at this moment what I can do at this moment can't go beyond that past and future lose their heaviness and the new comes in something that is fresh and new is always present you remain fresh and new like a day that's just like today this morning that beautiful song that morning has broken like the first morning no past blackbird has spoken like the first no past absolute presence and if you carry past into that perception it becomes obscured it even disappears and the morning is no longer fresh and you are no longer fresh and alive and the longer you live identified with form and with your story the more burdensome it gets and the world becomes feels stale and old and weary expressed in a character I believe in Shakespeare maybe it's Hamlet who is considering seem to me all the uses of this world weary, stale like bread that has become stale weary, stale and unprofitable meaning pointless, useless that's how it becomes you don't want to end up there and part of that is not reducing the magnificence as the song said last night not reducing the magnificence of this moment the depth and the aliveness of this moment that's all you ever have to a means to an end which is the story make it just into a

stepping stone so that I can reach the next chapter the next paragraph in the cheap fiction of my story of me so that simple thing bring the alertness wake up become aware of sense perceptions and that which underlies every sense perception yourself the perceiver the perceiving consciousness the attention in which there is no tension sensing the inner body the aliveness of being there and becoming alert to this moment it's no longer a means to an end it has a depth to it that is sufficient unto itself and you to know that you don't need to sit still you may be sitting still but it's not necessary to sit still you can be involved in movement and be fully present with fast movement slow movement be fully present in the movement enjoy the energy movement of this and be there also as the witness of it and yet you are doing what you have to do no, you are not in a hurry this is why you can do something fast if you have to because of that hyperactivity of the human mind perhaps there are fewer things that you need to do really fast but occasionally it is called for you may have to move fast and you are totally present in the movement enjoying that without needing to arrive at the next moment this moment is good enough I'm running to catch the train it's good, it feels good but you have to catch yourself that's why I have in Zen another famous saying hurry slowly hurry is maybe fast on the external slow means the stillness remains inside even though you are fast on the external so if you have to you can be very fast you look at martial arts they can be if they have to be fast they are very fast without losing the rootedness in being so it doesn't pull you out of being and then when you sit quietly in your room the dynamic aspect of being remains the stillness is also dynamic in you which means you don't feel the stillness remains vibrantly alive so in the stillness there is a vibrancy and in the external activity there is also a stillness so you have the two polarities or as I sometimes call it Buddha and Clint Eastwood character and the present moment not remembering it's not a means to an end give it fullest attention and enjoy it enjoy the doing you can't enjoy the doing if the next moment is more important than this enjoy whatever it is that is required of you at this moment the aliveness of it the external is allowed deeply and then the form so even if on the external it looks unpleasant I'm wet and cold and it's windy and I want to get home okay and then you bring a yes to it as we talked yesterday if you become a duck or wet poodle or whatever it is and the wet poodle is not complaining he's just wet he's a duck if he could speak some of you found the morning meditations very helpful the movement being present in every movement you can live like that and just to try a slow movement and be present is a beautiful thing to do just because it's not a means to an end when this arm is here it's not trying to get there it's just here and it's just here and just here here, here, here not I'm trying to get there here, beautiful so you can do that either by practicing Tai Chi or Kim's movement practice called Kim Fu Chi which a few years ago I saw her performing spontaneously for the first time in a retreat what is happening it's simply presence expressing itself as joyful movement and there was a slow kind of dance and I saw her doing it and I said what is this where does that come from it came out of presence the joyful expression of presence and in that moment I thought maybe what I'm witnessing is the early origin of Tai Chi perhaps that's how it started with someone allowing him or herself to express

spontaneously the state of presence in movement some people believe that Tai Chi originated when people observed the movement of animals and tried to imitate that but I believe it was a spontaneous expression of presence although of course if you watch animals you see a certain similarity between that being present in every movement and for example the movements of a cat a cat walking amazing to watch that and a monkey too they're not in a hurry just present they just watch and when they watch they just watch they're not thinking what's going on there they know what's going on without having to conceptualize it and then movement continues and suddenly there's an energy built up and they jump you could never think and then they're still again you could spend hours watching so if you practice movement it's a beautiful way of learning to be not to make this moment into a means to an end just a simple movement because in the ordinary consciousness every movement through it you want to get somewhere that's more important it could be spontaneous it could be a sequence that you follow but the important thing is this presence at every step and if you're disabled and can't move very well it would be enough to move your hands dance with your hands and you can make some activity into a movement that is present a dance wiping a table cleaning your shoes putting on a shirt and whenever that happens you are interrupting there's a gap in the continuity between past and future in your life there is a gap in your life in the story of me of presence a gap of presence and the more gaps of presence you have the more alive you are does the story suffer can you no longer think of me no, you can but it will become literature your life from pure cheap fiction soap opera that's of course why people love watching on TV the so called soap operas because it's a reflection of their own life oh that's good they all live like that it consumes a depth becomes and the outcome doesn't matter anymore it's just like the work true work of literature it's peripheral the outcome is on the periphery of your life am I going to make it or not well you may make it for a while and then you hit bottom so on the level of form this is dissolving about to dissolve the form here an energy field created by many humans being present an energy field of stillness and the form of the surroundings the nature here, the stillness that surrounds this place you don't need to feel sorry that you are leaving it because that's only the external form of our gathering this gathering is not separate from who you are without that it wouldn't be much it wouldn't be much so there's nothing really that you leave behind that is of any consequence because the essence is alive in you the essence of this gathering it's not separate from who you are so when you're sitting in your next the next thing in the story of me the next thing becomes a little less important as you feel the aliveness of the present moment even as you're sitting on the bus when the moment of arriving at the station is not that important this is the same as the gathering and then you check inside is it still now? you have to you never know it might be in the next moment is this still the same now? yeah, it is the form has changed but it's the same now and then wherever you go you have to check occasionally is it still now?

yeah, it is because the mind is still so you remain alive not only remain alive you deepen

the being there's depth to who you are regardless of the form of your story because if everybody is let's say a walking fictional work of fiction similar the life story of each person of you you could write your own book as it unfolds every day a new chapter wait for the next installment that suddenly has far greater depth to it and just as in great literature what happens to you or what does not happen to you as the story unfolds is secondary the now in the external form of your life of course at times you add things to your life things come to you it seems to go very well and then something happens and it becomes a period of loss of reduction of letting go that's all part of living it can't go up and up and up it doesn't make sense getting better on the level of form you can't get better and better as a form better and better and then you hit bottom present, yes that's better to be present now so it gets as the qualitative the improvement of your life is to do with the quality of the moment not quantitative what the drama is of your life or the problematic things that haven't resolved themselves yet and you don't know in the next few weeks or months of your life these problematic things your divorce proceedings whatever people get involved in as part of the soap opera the divorce proceedings are happening I don't know how is it all going to end am I going to survive the divorce proceedings or the acquisition of a new mansion somewhere it's all form ultimately not fulfilling and ultimately not even threatening there's always the aliveness of this death is guaranteed to the form oh that's okay that's a relief the essence of the so called teacher which is just a form is yours it's one with who you are the truth that has been spoken is your truth you recognized it as the truth as if you were listening to yourself because on a deeper level you were listening to yourself the voice arose in the field of consciousness as you listened to it I listened to it that's all there was no pre-planning now I'm going to teach them that there's nothing to teach them there's a oneness in the process there's nobody to teach anything consciousness speaks and you were still enough to listen that's all so this is not the end of anything really just changing forms in the field of consciousness

[Speaker 2] (8:31:52 - 8:35:18)

thank you in the new morning we celebrate we are the new man sunrise over the mountain spreading your light over the land sunrise another new morning we celebrate we are we are the new man sunrise sunrise over the mountain spreading your light over the land sunrise sunrise another new morning we celebrate we are the new man